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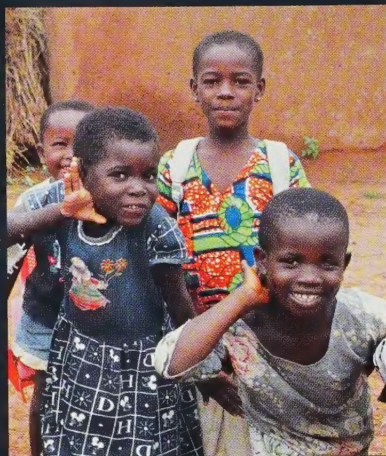




CIDA ABANDONS KAIROS + RESPONDING TO WEBBER + NATIONAL BUDGET WOES

# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

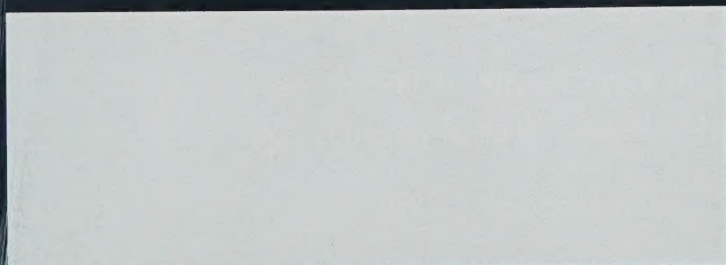
JANUARY 2010



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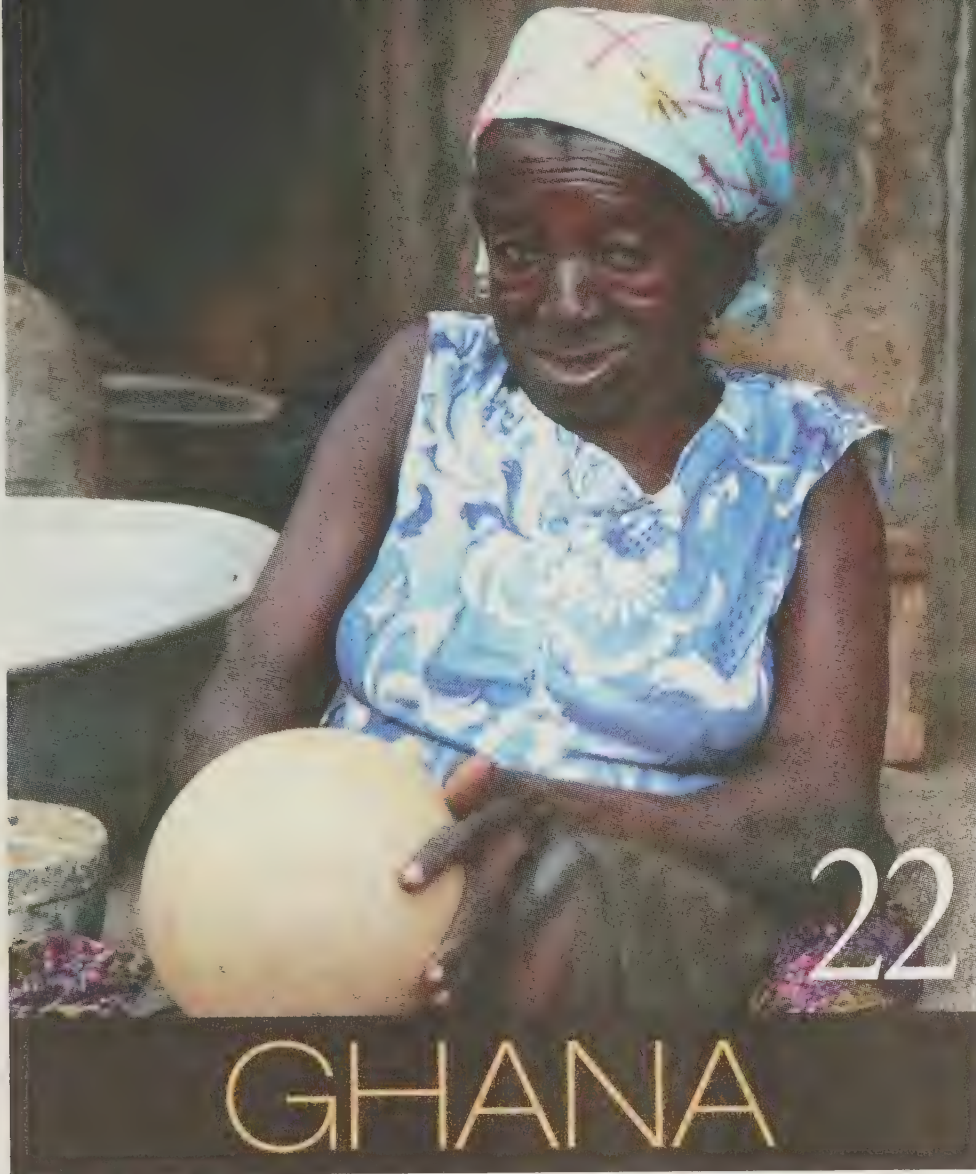
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# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD



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by Jayne Self and Karen Plater



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# Restore Kairos's Funding

GOD IS OPPOSED TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INJUSTICE. BY DAVID HARRIS

Mainline Canadian Christians were given a sackful of coal by the federal government just before Christmas when Stephen Harper's Tories abruptly cut funding from Kairos, the ecumenical justice coalition supported by 11 Christian groups, including the Presbyterian Church.

After a 35-year relationship and a rigorous approval process by Canadian International Development Agency staff, at the eleventh hour International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda refused to sign the papers releasing \$7 million in cooperative and matching funding.

That's \$7 million of your dollars to be used by your church for poverty relief, support for orphans and abused women, human rights and environmental advocacy.

Both CIDA and the minister's office have refused to clarify why Kairos's funding was cut, instead referring obliquely to changed federal priorities—priorities that changed a month or so before Kairos got approval from CIDA staff. Priorities that no one has been able or willing to explain how Kairos's work doesn't fit within.

Kairos also received an excellent, independent evaluation done for CIDA.

Given that, and given that Kairos has a long history with Ottawa and that CIDA staff gave Kairos's final application a solid stamp of approval, there are only three possibilities: CIDA staff are incompetent, CIDA staff weren't told about the changed priorities or Bev Oda, presumably under instruction from the command-and-control Prime Minister's Office, refused on political grounds.

Take your pick—and I seriously doubt it's the first two—it all falls down to the minister's responsibility for her department. So, Minister Oda, why? In detail, please. Our pages are open for response.

Because here's the thing. We



deserve an answer. It's our money.

Until some reasonable and detailed answer is given, we have to draw our own conclusions.

A public clue comes from Federal Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Minister John Baird who said that his party had opposed anti-Semitism as far back as 2001. It's oblique, but the reference to anti-Semitism is telling.

Let's be clear. All eight denominations behind the 11 groups that support Kairos (Anglican, Christian Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Quaker, United and Roman Catholic) are on record as opposing anti-Semitism in any form. As is Kairos.

Abroad, Kairos has been clear that it opposes violence of any sort in the Middle East. It supports the work of peacemakers in that region. That makes it a convenient target for those who pretend that all Palestinians support the violent factions and actions of Hamas and Fatah. And those who torque any criticism of the government of Israel into anti-Semitism.

In that complex maelstrom, Kairos has partnered with Jewish, Muslim and Christian peacemaking and development organizations. In past years, they have included groups providing primary care health clinics in Gaza, safe places for abused street children in Beirut, a facility for mentally challenged children in the Bekaa valley, advocates for democracy in

Palestine and Jewish and Arab women in Israel who try to build bridges in civil society. I've been there. I've seen their work.

Prime Minister Harper and ministers Baird and Oda: It is not an option for Canadian Christians to work to alleviate poverty and inequality and to raise environmental concerns and to advocate for the downtrodden and voiceless. It is a command from Jesus who himself reiterated the message of the prophets of his people, the Jews, before him.

There is one overriding theme in both the Jewish and Christian scriptures: God is outspokenly concerned with and opposed to economic and political injustice. From Moses to Micah and Job to Jesus the message is the same.

Restore Kairos's funding. We'll forgive you. We're Christians.

\*\*\*\*\*

On a completely different (and happier) note, I want to introduce you to two new columns. The first focuses on the Presbyterian Church's missionaries, mission projects, and congregational mission trips. This is an area of growing interest, especially in congregations, and we hope to be able to share many engaging stories with you. See page 19.

The second is a monthly letter from Presbyterian World Service and Development staff, which we hope provides a glimpse into their travels as they visit countries to monitor projects supported by the church's relief and development agency. See page 21.

As always, we welcome your comments on these and any stories in the magazine and online. ■

David Harris



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## Moving Toward Creative Change

I really appreciated the October *Record*, especially David Harris' editorial, Start Something Unthinkable, reflecting on the past moderator, Rev. Cheol Soon Park's excellent 135th assembly sermon, and David Webber's reflection on his recent trip to observe a number of New Zealand Presbyterian churches, entitled The Rural Church. Of course, Webber's article isn't just about rural churches but about "doing church" in a much different, more entrepreneurial, more flexible, yet profoundly biblical way. I am convinced, as both of these writers seem to be, that the Presbyterian Church in Canada needs to hurry up and recover what it means to be a "movement" rather than grinding along as an "institution" as Kennon Callahan puts it. A movement wants to be adaptable; an institution has trouble changing anything. The only problem is that being as institutional as we are, these changes can only come about by legislation within our presbyteries and assemblies. That takes a long time. In the meantime, those of us who care for creative change are working, and praying, as hard as we can to bring it about.

REV. DR. HANS KOUWENBERG

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

## Re The Rural Church, October

A very thought-provoking, well-written article. Rev. Webber, I think Canada's version of number eight wire would more accurately be called duct tape.

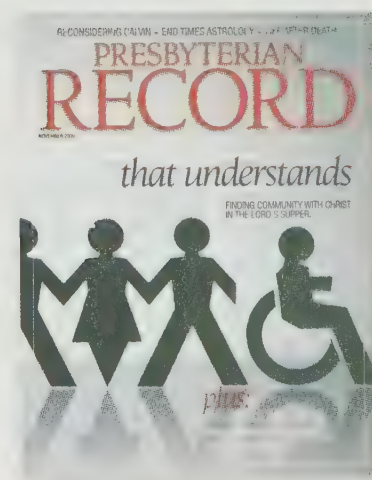
GARY NAYLOR, VIA EMAIL

## Hopeful and Needful Articles

Love the stylized front cover graphics (and those inside the cover as well). However, this is not the only point of communication today.

For oh so long many of us who are called laity have wondered at denomi-

# Letters



national rules about communion-serving, even baptism-applying and more. Rules made up by denominations are not found in scripture at all. Here we have heard from those seeing what we have been seeing for years ... the need to exercise the priesthood of all believers (in Christ). It isn't a big stretch to see that many are Holy Spirit-abled to lead and serve with Holy Spirit-given gifts, given for the good of all. Even without the rules of multi-degrees, without Word and Sacrament titles applied.

Imagine Christ equipping his priests to serve in all the needed ways.

Thank you to David Webber and the report on New Zealand's rural church; for Calvin Brown's comments for Lay Missionaries and Roland DeVries on "Our" Church. We also loved the story called The Piano by Harold McNabb. (A wonderful no coincidence-at-all story of Jesus' Spirit at work across the land.)

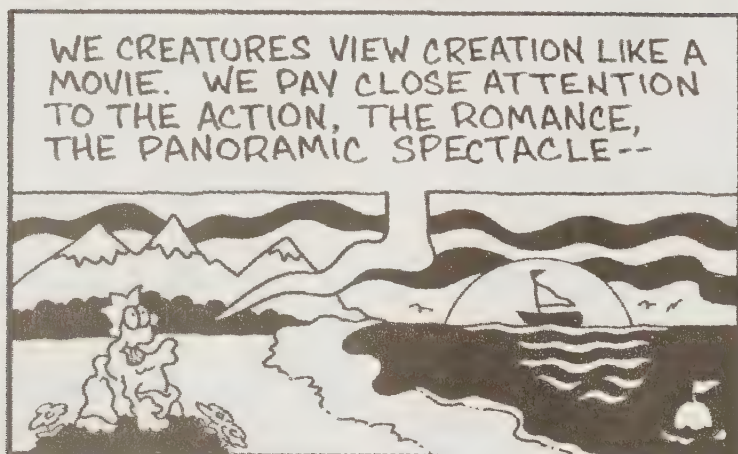
Thanks for publishing these encouraging, forward looking, hopeful and needful articles.

Go PCC ... open the doors and windows to fresh Holy Spirit winds and let God out of the proverbial ➤

write to us

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. EMAIL US  
YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS ISSUE TO:  
[LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](mailto:LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)

## Pontius' Puddle



box that we try so hard to maintain with our many denominational rules.

Letting God be God seems the best idea.

PAT ALLISON, NEW BRUNSWICK

David Webber's article on the rural church and Calvin Brown's on lay missionaries obviously hit on an issue for people living in the Peace Country of Alberta.

Before I had even opened the cover of the *Record*, I had a couple of people call me about the articles; there was conversation over lunch after church; and a non-Presbyterian friend that I didn't even know read the *Record* also commented on the articles. All of this is interesting as rarely does any article in the *Record* initiate so much conversation around here.

Both articles speak to a need in the church to address the issues of rural ministry in Canada. Lack of ordained ministers in rural Canada creates a challenge in worship and receiving the sacraments that those in urban centres never, or at least rarely, ever have to consider. At one point it seemed as though the church might be going in the right direction with a paper that was sent for study on presbytery-approved pastoring elders a few years ago. Many were disappointed when we heard that the study was shelved as a number of presbyteries and sessions said there was

no need for such ministry in Canada.

It was an option that for us held promise and after such a dismal response I wondered if anyone cared about us, and for that matter who really understands our needs. The two articles directly speak to the need to do ministry differently in rural settings and often these ministries do not fit neatly into the polity of the church. There is a need for change and allowing lay missionaries to administer communion is only one of the issues that needs to be addressed. The direction of the 2009 General Assembly in instructing the clerks and named committees to create "legislation, guidelines, education and requirements" for lay missionaries to serve communion is a positive step forward. It is my hope and prayer that those entrusted with this task do not create a response that continues to impede ministry in rural settings with legislation and requirements that are impossible to implement and abide by.

JOYCE YANISHEWSKI, WANHAM, ALTA.

### Front and Centre

*Re Doing Church, November*

The insights and learnings afforded our denomination from this article are too significant to be left unaddressed. This year in my own presbytery we will see the closure of the seventh congregation during my time of ministry

here. More significantly, five of those will have taken place in the last six years. The time has come for us to take a hard and realistic look at the future faced by a multitude of congregations within our denomination. Many of the factors to be addressed have been evident to those of us who have been working with the Leadership Roundtable (profiled in the April 2009 issue) over the past year. These include:

- Motivation for change coming from financial necessity rather than a passion for ministry. Rev. Geoffrey Howard is perceptive in his assessment that efforts arising from this base are doomed for failure.
- A contentment with the way things currently are even though the future appears doubtful. Elder Jan Clapp is one of a growing number of lay leadership disheartened by the reticence of individuals to "rock the boat."
- A reluctance to make spiritual issues a foremost part of the challenge. Kudos to Clapp who has identified this as a front burner issue.
- Buildings, their contents and perhaps even more the independence of congregations are held on to much too tightly.
- Overdependence on ministers. As Deb Stenabaugh notes, "We still all believe the minister is a leader." Research repeatedly indicates that approximately 92 per cent of all ministers do not believe they have the gift of leadership. Ironically, they



frequently stand in the way of releasing many gifted lay leaders who have large measures of leadership capability.

- The need to embrace a new model of ministry that goes beyond simply taking care of the sheep already in the fold.
- A willingness to go in the direction of change knowing that losses will occur. As Rev. Neal Mathers notes, the decision of three congregations to amalgamate brought with it some loss of membership. The research of William Bridges of the University of Michigan causes him to conclude that organizations these days face one of two choices—slow death or deep change. Nowhere is that more evident than in the congregations of our denomination.
- A serious examination of the significant role lay ministry could play in the revitalization of some congregations. Too often congregations, having employed part-time lay ministry find themselves much more content than during times of full-time clergy oversight. If we are to utilize lay ministry effectively we must raise the standards for both training and the support provided by congregations for this.

I am uncertain as to whether or not this article will resonate with significant numbers of our people—let alone leadership in our denomination—but I wanted to encourage you to be relentless in keeping the matter front and centre.

**REV. DR. CHUCK CONGRAM**, BELLE RIVER, ONT.

"Doing Church," November issue



## On Dying and Death

*Re The Longest Day, November*

I have just read Dr. Vissers' article. I have to say it was very revealing, insightful and informative on a topic that most of us have difficulty facing up to. We are all going to die. This is something that we North Americans seem to deny.

At the present time I am a student at Knox College, Toronto and as part of the course Human Growth and Spiritual Journey, we have to prepare a seminar with two other students on a topic of our choice. We chose on dying and death, not the most happy of topics, or perhaps happier than one would at first imagine?

Vissers gives us some wonderful insights into the question, what happens when I die? I have had six experiences in my lifetime of either a person close to me dying or my own possible demise. They have all given me pause to wonder.

I like, as Dr. Vissers does, Einstein's idea that "time is relative, then when you die, the end of all things has come for you." Eschatologically speaking, if we believe that Jesus Christ, Son of God, is our Saviour and beloved friend and brother, then we shall be resurrected as he promised and we shall be and live with God through eternity.

If we look at Revelation 21, we are given the picture of the New Jerusalem, once again very reassuring.

Finally, Vissers asks us to have a look at 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and we read what Paul has to say about the resurrection body. Paul refers to other writers of the Old Testament but particularly Isaiah 25 which tells us, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" through Jesus Christ who conquered sin and death by his resurrection from the dead. What wonderful images and truths there are in the Bible and thanks to Dr. Vissers' insight, we have been given an earthly look at our heavenly home, which as Christians is the final destination of our spiritual journey.

**BARBARA SMIBERT**, ANCASTER, ONT. ➤

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## FRONT Letters

### Tending the Garden

*Re Silence, Solitaire and the Soul, October*

Rev. David Webber's article was, for me, very timely as I have recently been going through a period of reflections and remembrances.

It has been many years since I spent any time at the dry end of a fishing rod and I have never been a hunter. There are other ways I get my battery recharged by solitude; and solitude involves silence, since I am not yet in the habit of talking to myself.

The solitude I enjoy while digging or weeding in the garden has been a major benefit to my creative juices while thinking out a solution to a technical problem. As an engineer often having to travel, I have had many periods of solitude and many of these periods have created opportunities for quiet prayer, reflection, remembrances and have given adequate proof of the wisdom of taking advantage of these moments. I do not usually go out to seek these moments; they come upon me and they are most productive in refreshing the soul.

It is at moments such as these that the words of old hymns, paraphrases from the King James version of the psalm book and the memory of Gaelic psalm-singing in a congregational setting come to mind. These memories remind me of the heritage I came from and the influence it has on me now.

MURDO SMITH, VICTORIA

### Some Good Things Happened

*Re A Special Bible, November*

I'd like to hear more of George's story; it's important to hear what he has to say. It would be interesting to have some of his experiences in the form of memoirs in the *Record*.

My uncle (he was native) Albert Henton was a janitor at Cecilia Jeffrey School and he had some good stories from there. As well, my aunt taught some sewing and cooking, and other people I knew were teachers (like George McMillan) and they were all good people. It's a shame they have been branded as bad, as they did their

best to do a good job.

There were some good things that happened and some good stories to tell; I'd like to read them.

VALERIE CANFIELD, VIA EMAIL

I was deeply impressed by George S. McMillan's feature article where he speaks of the uneasiness and bitterness that is now part of the lives of those women and men who spent many years working and teaching in residential schools. I believe that, without taking away from the pain many children experienced in the residential schools or denying their demands for redress, healing and reconciliation can only take place when we listen to both sides of the story.

LOIS KLEMPA

### On Our Website:

Rev. Geoff Johnston's thoughts on John Calvin in the November issue garnered some response; and a reader reminisces about Camp Kintail.

### Corrections:

There are four well-deserved chastisements this month: One for the lateness of the October issue; one for errors in the Knox, Woodstock People and Places entry in November; Geoff Johnston was never Principal of Presbyterian College, Montreal, as noted in November, but rather Director of Studies; and Joseph McLelland's first book was actually *The Visible Words of God* (1957)—*The Other Six Days* was his second. ■

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# A Holy Uprising

GOD WILLING. BY ANDREW FAIZ AND RON VANAUKEN



**T**he big question is, to what do we refer when we use the word “church?” Is 50 Wynford the church? Or Assembly Council, or the Life and Mission Agency? Or General Assembly, or our presbyteries or our synods? Are the colleges the church? Or our pastors and preachers? What is the church?

For me, all of these are in service of the church. I define the church as the pews, the presbyters. As I’ve written many times in this column, I wish you could see the church from my window—because from my window I see a lot of very engaged presbyters waiting for some permission to serve.

Rev. Ron VanAuken sent the following as a letter to the editor. I read it many times and felt it read more like a manifesto—the permission the presbyters seek—than a letter. Others have said as much in the past few years in the Record, most notably Rev. Cheol Soon Park, but Ron’s declaration is so faithfully blunt it deserves to be inscribed. I hope you will study it line by line. And, then, well, let the games begin:

## A MANIFESTO:

Presbyterians, Uniteds, Anglicans: the ecclesiastical equivalent of the “Big Three” automakers. The difference: we have yet to come to recognize our crisis situation and when we do, we will come to the realization that unlike the automakers, we have no one to turn to who will bail us out.

We are a denomination in a post-denominational era. Innovators and creative thinkers have been sidelined. Prophetic voices have been silenced. While membership declines and congregations close, the church has responded by elevating clerks to the 21st-century equivalent of the scribes of old, moderators of General Assembly have become impotent popes for a year, and executive staff allowed stipends and allowances that far exceed what the average minister serving a congregation receives.

“Pursue not a divisive course,” the circle-the-wagons call that came into prominence post-’25 has timified all but the boldest. *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est!* (A reformed church must ever be reforming itself!) Alas, we have forsaken our roots.

Our polity that served us well in the past has become an encumbrance,

a millstone. We will argue, we will discuss, we may even debate, but in the end we will march on to our demise because the demons have blinded us to our own reality and assured us that all is well. Parodying that great hymn, “Like a mighty tortoise moves the Church of God. Brothers we are treading where we’ve always trod.”

The only hope is in a holy uprising of men and women, young and old, of every culture who prefer being a follower of Christ to being a Christian, for whom denominational tags mean nothing; but the Church of Jesus Christ, one, holy, catholic and apostolic means everything. A holy uprising that will not countenance business as usual, that will refuse to sit in courts looking at the backs of their brothers and sisters in Christ but will insist on seeing and speaking face-to-face. A holy uprising where traditions that no longer serve the mission of Christ are vanquished, where titles and positions have become meaningless, where clerical garb and vestments give way to those followers of the one from Nazareth who are content simply to be and be seen as the apprentices of a carpenter. A holy uprising.

A new Pentecost where those endued

OUR POLITY  
THAT SERVED  
US WELL IN  
THE PAST HAS  
BECOME AN  
ENCUMBRANCE,  
A MILLSTONE

with the Spirit will once again speak and act with boldness and with a holy disregard for ecclesiastical correctness because they have a higher calling and are passionately pursuing it.

Will it happen? Even now the torch of the gospel we once carried is being passed to others; nay, not passed, it is being taken from us. It is being taken from us because we have not the visual acuity to discern the times in which we were living. A holy uprising. Will there be a holy uprising? Will we yet be able to shake loose from all that binds us and experience a fresh wind of the Spirit?

*Deo volente.* ■

Rev. Ron VanAuken is minister at Albion Gardens, Toronto.

# Churches Share Less with National Offices

Staff to take one week of unpaid leave in 2010 and 2011. BY CONNIE PURVIS

A SHARPER-THAN-EXPECTED decline in Presbyterians Sharing income will result in the loss of up to five positions at the church's national offices as well as the loss of a week's wages each year for two years.

The 2009 budget called for Presbyterians Sharing to raise about \$8.6 million in revenue, but indications were that only about \$8.4 million would come in by the year's end.

Stephen Roche, the church's treasurer and chief financial officer, told staff at a meeting called to announce the reductions that there was no way to know if the drop in contributions was a result of the recession or whether contributions would recover.

Since 1999, Presbyterians Sharing revenue, which supports national programs and ministries, has ranged from \$8.6 million to a high of \$8.76 in 2006, but it has fallen short of budget expectations since 2003, thanks in part to budget levels being raised by \$50,000 each year. In 2008, the budget shortfall was nearly \$400,000.

Assembly Council approved measures in late November that will reduce national office payroll by \$300,000 over the next two years and permanently reduce its staff by between three and a half to five full-time-equivalent positions by 2011.

The national office building will be shut down for one week in 2010 and again in 2011, during which time staff will take an unpaid leave. In addition,

no cost of living allowances will be granted for the next two years. A cumulative COLA will be restored in 2012, but will not be retroactive for the previous two years. COLA is approved by General Assembly each year.

"We have to have an impact," said Stephen Kendall, principal clerk. "We have to let the church know something is being given up—a week of salary and also a week of work."

The national office management team said the changes were necessary to avoid more drastic cuts in the future.

**"We have to let the church know something is being given up—  
a week of salary and also  
a week of work"**

The 51 staff affected work for the Life and Mission Agency, apart from core Presbyterian World Service and Development positions, as well as the assembly office, financial services and support staff.

Pension and benefits staff, PWS&D and the Women's Missionary Society are all separately funded, as are the *Presbyterian Record* and Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, which are separate corporations.

"Courts have typically allowed employers a little leniency on salary," said Mia London, a labour lawyer with a Toronto-based firm. Although employers cannot legally change fundamental terms of an employee's contract,

such as rate of pay and hours of work, she said changes that result in a salary loss of less than 10 per cent are rarely worth time in court. The proposed changes will probably not surpass a six per cent loss in salary over two years.

The cuts are part of a complex package to temporarily reduce costs and increase revenue by \$900,000 over the next two years, and permanently by \$800,000 per year beginning in 2011. The budget revisions include \$600,000 in temporary revenue transfers to the operating budget and \$400,000 in permanent transfers from other church funds.

According to Gord Walford, convener of the finance committee, overly optimistic projections of Presbyterians Sharing revenue in an already finely balanced budget meant the committee suddenly "saw a lot of red ink" down the road.

Although the council presented General Assembly in June with gradual budget reductions of between \$100,000 and \$400,000 each year over the next three years for a total of \$700,000, the committee had to make all the cuts for 2011, said treasurer Roche.

Other cuts include \$41,000 from the General Assembly office, \$110,000 from the LMA and \$13,000 from support services. National committees will be restricted to meeting in the Toronto area because it is the cheapest travel hub in the country, and travel budget restrictions are included in the cuts. ➤



The grant provided to Presbyterian colleges will be cut by a quarter of a per cent, saving about \$25,000 a year.

To buoy the operating fund, council increased up to eight times the amount of undesignated bequest money in the fund. Normally, \$25,000 of an undesignated bequest is kept in the fund, with the remainder treated as a deferred bequest. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, up to \$200,000 from undesignated bequests can remain in the operating fund.

A number of large bequests received in the past few years prompted the council to establish a stabilization fund from which the operating fund could draw up to \$240,000 each year. Beginning in 2011, the annual withdrawal limit will almost double to \$440,000.

Another \$200,000 will be withdrawn annually from the new church development capital fund, administered by Canada Ministries, and added to the operating fund. The capital fund, which held almost \$6.7 million

at the end of 2008, receives 30 per cent of the assets of dissolved congregations and generates about \$250,000 in interest income each year.

General Assembly will also be asked to approve biennial assemblies starting in 2012 or 2013. Assembly costs about \$350,000. Even if a national event were held in alternate years, it would save the church about \$125,000 annually.

A recommendation at the 2009 assembly asked sessions, presbyteries and other courts of the church to vote on biennial assemblies and to provide feedback to be presented at the 2010 assembly.

The changes were not passed without critical comment. "As a member of the national stewardship committee, I've seen these numbers many times," said Rev. Wes Denyer of St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont., as the proposals were presented for ratification.

"We continue to fail to find—or fail to attempt to find—a more creative way of

funding the work of the national church. What I see is the way we do things isn't working, and I see nothing in this proposal to change the way we do things." ■

### Drop in Regional Staff Grants

Funding provided for regional staff will decline for most synods beginning in 2011 as cuts in Women's Missionary Society funding take effect. A new formula for allocating funds was approved at a September meeting.

Each synod will receive enough funding for one staff person and the remainder will be distributed according to the membership of each synod, regardless of its geographic size.

The Synod of the Atlantic Provinces' grant will rise by almost a quarter to \$83,000 while declines range from 10 per cent or \$15,000 in Central, North-eastern Ontario and Bermuda, to a 50 per cent loss of \$74,000 in British Columbia.—C.P.

## Presbyterian Museum Seeks Funds for Part-Time Curator

Committee hopes to raise \$300,000 in three years.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

IN 1996, the father of the National Presbyterian Museum, Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston, laughed at the thought of financial difficulties, recalled Rev. Duncan Jeffrey, a member of the museum advisory committee. At that time, \$100,000 in a museum fund must have seemed sufficient. But as interest rates declined the fund generated less annual revenue, and expenses chipped away at the capital.

In 2009, Assembly Council endorsed the creation of a memorial fund to continue Johnston's work. The museum has launched a three-year campaign to grow that fund to \$300,000—a sum that could pay the salary of a part-time curator through the interest it would generate.

"John was responsible for gathering items from many different sources, and since his untimely death [in January 2008] it's been a matter of picking up the pieces," said Rev. Angus Sutherland, convener of the committee on history and the museum advisory committee.

"It's much easier for the museum to have one person in charge, and someone who can be the focal point of the ongoing operations."

Currently, the advisory committee is responsible for museum decisions, with most on-site work done by a volunteer.

The National Presbyterian

Our past, your **present**, the future of the  
National Presbyterian Museum



Museum is housed in St. John's, Toronto.

When it was founded in 1996, its exhibits centred on a vast collection of communion tokens. It has since expanded with artifacts donated by missionaries, congregations and individuals. For more information, see [presbyterianmuseum.ca](http://presbyterianmuseum.ca).

Donations can be sent to national church offices designated for the John A. Johnston Memorial Fund. ■

# Life and Mission Agency Rethinks its Vision

November meeting considers focusing programs, limiting costs. BY CONNIE PURVIS

AS THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH makes challenging decisions, the main thing we're asking ourselves is, "What do we believe?" said Rev. Daniel Cho, convener of the Life and Mission Agency in his opening remarks at the November meeting. "What's our vision? How can we continue to do what God has called us to do?"

Reports presented by the church's national mission agencies included questions about their focus and future as they adapt to best meet the needs and desires of congregations, and examined plans for financial cuts to be made within the next three years.

## Canada Ministries Reports Successful Rural Ministry Pilot Project, Tweaks Grants Committee

Canada Ministries reported a successful pilot project meant to encourage new ministers to consider rural and remote charges. A student from Presbyterian College spent the summer working with the congregation in Geraldton, Ont. The local church covered the costs of transportation, stipend, and room and board; Canada Ministries provided a grant at the end of the summer intended to help pay for tuition and books for the coming academic year.

The agency is considering expanding the project to offer up to four such grants each year for the next five years, following consultation with the Presbyterian colleges and the creation of appropriate guidelines for the program.

To cut travel costs, Canada Ministries' yearly grants budget will be determined at an advisory committee meeting. Synod and national native ministries conveners will join via teleconference.

The advisory committee is drawn from seven people in one region of Canada, rotating the location and members each six years. It meets at least three times yearly.

LMA also approved guidelines for Canada Ministries' capital fund for renewing ministries. Grants drawn from this fund are limited to \$200,000 and are intended for major building projects or renovations that are "clearly part of a greater plan for renewal."

## The Vine Will Continue to Grow

The Vine resource network received good reviews in an evaluation of the two-year pilot project. Although the report indicated the service was not yet "well-known or used by the majority of congregations, especially by lay people," those who used it had

high praise for the staff and prompt responses to their enquiries.

LMA endorsed the committee's recommendation that the Vine continue beyond its two-year trial period. Tori Smit has recently replaced Vine head Dorothy Henderson.

## Presbyterians Sharing Remains a Unified Budget

LMA members rejected the idea of allowing congregations to designate how their Presbyterians Sharing contributions will be used. Legally, donations with designations attached must be used only for the designated purpose. Members felt designated giving would create competition among the missions supported by Presbyterians Sharing, and would increase administrative costs substantially.

## LMA Discusses the Future of International Missions

The church's three international mission offices proposed a vision for the future of international mission work at the national level. In a draft paper, they suggested the departments "must work closely together to focus our mission activities" and concentrate human and financial resources "in strategic areas."

The three offices will shift their focus to five countries where the church has strong ties and invested resources: Malawi, Ghana, Guatemala, India and Eastern Europe. Although they will not abandon their work in other areas of the world, the bulk of their time and resources will be used to back programs and partner organizations in these countries.

The paper was intended to probe the will of the LMA and was approved in principle. ■

The Life and Mission Agency discussed financial cuts, grants structures and Presbyterians Sharing.





# Children Helping Children

Letters ask for access to HIV medication. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THERE ARE an estimated two million children living with HIV and AIDS around the world and two-thirds of them do not have the HIV medication they need to live. At the United Nations in November, letters written by children from 14 countries were on display, asking governments and pharmaceutical companies for greater access to drug treatment. The Write for Life exhibit drew representatives from UNICEF, UNAIDS and numerous country missions to the UN.

"The messages from the children were simple: kids are sick, they need our help," said the Presbyterian Church's Karen Plater, associate secretary for Stewardship and Education for Mission. Plater opened the exhibit as the co-chair of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance's HIV and AIDS strategy group, the group responsible for launching the UN's Prescription for Life campaign. "Our world is so complex today that sometimes we lose sight of that simplicity. The children remind us that this fight is not over, we need to keep fighting."

The letters urge simple and affordable diagnostic tests for infants that can be performed on the spot, increased antiretroviral treatment for all HIV-positive expectant mothers, and increased efforts by pharmaceutical companies and governments to find more appropriate and accessible treatments for children and infants.

Plater also moderated a panel discussion featuring a diverse group of experts in the field of HIV.

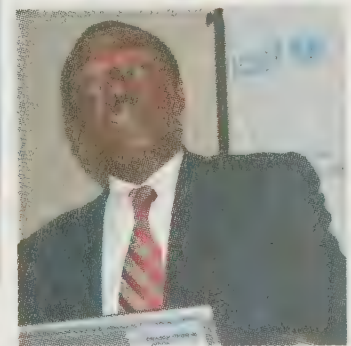
"The speakers emphasized that appropriate testing and follow-up care were important in identifying children living with HIV, and that we need to provide more appropriate and accessible treatments for children and infants," said Plater. "All agreed, while progress has been made in both testing and treatment, there is a lot more to be done."

One of the main challenges to progress is the fact that preventing transmission to the child involves many steps. Mothers first need to be identified, then, antiretroviral therapy must be given to the mother during pregnancy, then to the child when the child is born, followed by a program to prevent transmission through breast feeding.

"When I was at the International AIDS conference in Mexico in 2008 it was fairly controversial about the best



The PCC's Karen Plater, Rob Dintruff (top right), of Abbott Pharmaceuticals, and Dr. Rene Ehounou Ekpini, UNICEF



way to feed the child," said Plater. "Some studies showed that in settings where there is little access to clean water, sanitation and health services, that even with an HIV-positive mother, exclusive breast feeding for the first six months was still best for the baby, because the risk of the baby dying of malnutrition or diarrhea from contaminated water was much higher than contracting HIV."

Ensuring access to these numerous treatments, choosing the most appropriate type of drug treatment, as well as ensuring compliance, are therefore hotly discussed in expert circles.

"At the panel discussion in New York, we were also reminded that the best way to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV was to ensure that mothers don't get infected."

Presbyterian World Service and Development is a member of the ecumenical agency, providing grants for their advocacy work. PWS&D is working with partners in Canada as well as Malawi, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Pakistan on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, providing home-based care to people living with AIDS, providing access to HIV and AIDS counselling and testing in remote areas, teaching and equipping people to prevent the spread, supporting grandmothers and other guardians caring for orphans and vulnerable children, and working against stigma and discrimination.

According to the EAA, 90 per cent of the more than two million children with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa, where access to basic health care is often available only to the privileged. "This is about the basic right to life," said Dr. Rene Ehounou Ekpini, chief of the HIV/AIDS health section at UNICEF. "This is about inequality. This is about justice." ■



# CIDA Abandons Kairos

Canadian churches' international justice arm cut off after 35 years. BY CONNIE PURVIS

CHURCH COMMUNITIES and officials, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have called on the Canadian government to restore funding to a church-supported justice organization after it was cut abruptly in November.

In a letter forwarded to Prime Minister Stephen Harper by Kairos, the retired South African archbishop called the possible limiting of the group's work "an unparalleled setback for the vulnerable and disenfranchised" in the global south.

The cuts came on Nov. 30 when a Canadian International Development Agency official informed Executive Director Mary Corkery that an application for \$7 million for four years of international development work would not be granted. When asked why, the spokesperson said the group no longer fit within CIDA's priorities, but no further information was available. Kairos' contract with CIDA expired the same day.

Kairos, an organization that represents seven of Canada's largest denominations including the Presbyterian Church, has received funds from CIDA for 35 years.

According to Kairos, the new four-year contract was submitted on March 15, 2009, processed by CIDA staff and had been essentially approved by July, awaiting only the signature of Bev Oda, minister of international co-operation.

**According to Kairos, the new four-year contract was submitted on March 15, 2009 and was essentially approved by July**

Although the contract was due to expire at the end of September, it was extended until Nov. 30 with interim funding.

"We were told there were no problems," said Corkery.

In a brief statement faxed to Kairos on Dec. 4, Oda reiterated three priorities established by CIDA in May: food security, sustainable economic growth and children and youth. Kairos focuses on development and advocacy in areas of human rights and environmental sustainability.

Guy Smagghe, senior program coordinator with Presbyterian World Service and Development, suggested cuts to Kairos are essentially cuts to

the peace-building and humanitarian work of the church's agency. PWS&D provides \$65,000 a year for Kairos' global partnerships program—an amount formerly multiplied three times by the CIDA grant.

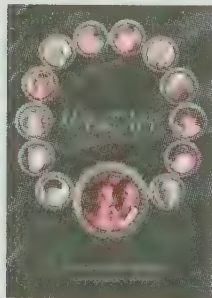
"As a taxpayer, I would be worried about a minister not signing an agreement after all the work staff did to evaluate it," he noted.

"Kairos received an excellent evaluation by CIDA," said Stephen Allen, the Presbyterian Church's associate secretary of Justice Ministries and a representative on the group's board of directors. "Kairos' financial management systems are very sound. Kairos' program is quite consistent with the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act of May 2008 [which set out a mandate for government aid]."

Presbyterians can express concerns to their MPs by downloading a form letter from [presbyterian.ca/pconnect/daily/4851](http://presbyterian.ca/pconnect/daily/4851).

Kairos took its current form in 2001 and is a continuation of CIDA-supported church coalitions dating back to 1973. ■

## New Anthology to Launch in February



"I don't knit, crochet, sew, play golf," said Patricia Anne Elford, a *Record* contributor and member of an Ontario chapter of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign. "The Petawawa Grannies are all talented in one way or many and have turned those skills to the cause. I preach, teach, write and edit. The idea of a book, an anthology, came to me. All human

beings, professional writers or not, have grandparents, living or dead, known or unknown."

*Grandmothers' Necklace*, an anthology composed by writers in Canada, the United States and Ireland, will feature prose

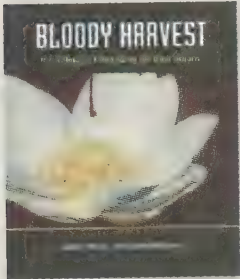
and poetry about grandmothers whose backgrounds span the globe. Contributors include former *Record* columnist Phil Callaway and former *Glad Tidings* editor L. June Stevenson.

The book is slated to launch in February at a series of public readings. Copies can be ordered from Elford by emailing [granniesnecklace@hotmail.com](mailto:granniesnecklace@hotmail.com), through Essence Publishing at [essencegroup.com/publishing.html](http://essencegroup.com/publishing.html), or possibly through the WMS Bookroom.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign was launched by the Stephen Lewis Foundation to raise support and awareness for grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa who are providing for grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. Proceeds from the sale of the book will support this work. ■ —C.P.



# Community News Briefs



## Stop Exploitation of Falun Gong Practitioners, Says Former MP

Longtime Presbyterian and former MP David Kilgour stepped up his battle against China's human rights abuses in a new co-authored book: *Bloody Harvest: Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China*. It was released in November.

The book is based on interviews with Falun Gong practitioners who escaped forced labour camps and detention centres in their native China, and is the culmination of years of research and advocacy.

"They told us of working in appalling conditions for up to 16 hours daily with no pay, little food, being cramped together on the floor for sleeping, and being tortured,"

Kilgour said at a November press conference in Ottawa. "The [Chinese] government denies that organs for transplants are being sourced from prisoners who are Falun Gong practitioners. Yet, it accepts that organs for transplants are being sourced from prisoners. The only debate we have with the government is which group of prisoners is the source of organs."

*Bloody Harvest* was co-written with David Matas, a human rights lawyer. —C.P.

## St. Andrew's, Lindsay, Opens New Wing

It was 12 years in the making, but on Nov. 15, 2009, the congregation of St. Andrew's, Lindsay, Ont., dedicated a new addition to their 119-year-old church.

The three-storey, 8,300-square-foot "accessibility wing" features several new meeting rooms (including a dedicated room for an Alcoholics Anonymous group that meets four times weekly), new offices, a nursery, a new kitchen, and a portico



St. Andrew's, Lindsay, Ont.

entrance. The wing cost about \$2 million to build, but the total project cost about \$3.4 million and included the purchase of additional land.

"We're a downtown church," said Arol Fairbairn, the church's caretaker and chairman of the building committee. "The lack of meeting rooms was really hampering our outreach."

The church draws an average of 230 people each week. —C.P. ■

## Nominees for Moderator

Three nominees for this year's General Assembly were announced Dec. 1. The candidates are:

- **Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent**  
Minister at St. David's in St. John's, Nfld. Presbytery of Newfoundland.
- **Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls**  
Dean of students and professor of Hebrew Bible at the Vancouver School of Theology. Presbytery of Westminster.
- **Rev. Dr. Herb Gale**  
Associate secretary of Planned Giving. Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington.

Ballots have been sent to presbytery members, and votes will be tallied on April 1. February's *Record* will include a full story on each candidate. The 136th General Assembly begins June 6 in Sydney, N.S. ■ —C.P.

### ELDERS' INSTITUTE St. Andrew's Hall

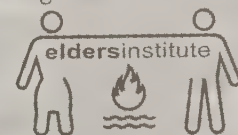
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Gracias!

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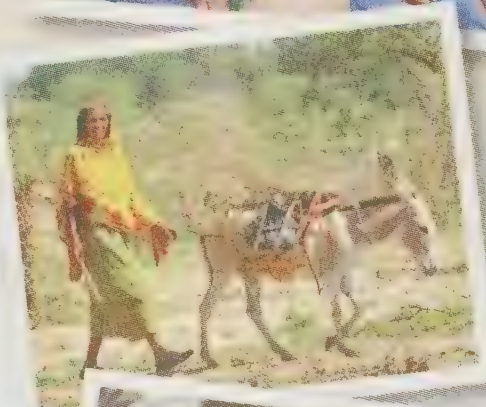
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## Year of Calvin Ends

Celebrations exceed expectations.

TWO PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS, St. Andrew's Hall, part of the Vancouver School of Theology, and Presbyterian College in Montreal, held autumn events to commemorate the end of the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. Each event brought together a diverse group of presenters who prompted discussion on Calvin's teachings.

In Montreal, the October weekend began with a lecture on Calvin's use of beauty. The Swiss reformer, typically known more for his personal austerity than his concern for esthetics, was actually quite taken by the theme of beauty in the manifestation of God.

The speaking roster included many familiar Presbyterian names—Stephen Farris of St. Andrew's Hall, Karla Wubbenhorst of Westminster-St. Paul's, Guelph, Ont., and former principal William Klempa—though several other traditions were represented including Anglican and Roman Catholic, as well as a representative from Quebec's French-speaking Reformed churches.

The event was rounded out by Richard Topping, former minister at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, (which hosted the event along with the college), who lectured on Calvin and holy scripture.

Topping was also part of Calvin @ 500, the September event held at St. Andrew's Hall where he was officially installed as professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition. In his inaugural lecture, Topping took issue with biblical interpretation, arguing, "They marginalize the agency of God in the task of scripture interpretation." He critiqued the tendency of interpreters to be "estranged from





what they believe in order to read about what they believe," and emphasized the need for "putting the 'holy' back into holy scripture."

Justice Ministries' Stephen Allen argued, "Social and economic themes are 'interwoven with the fundamental character of Calvin's theology." He referenced Calvin's commentary on Exodus 16:19: "A fair distribution can become reality if the rich ... do not gorge themselves upon the hunger and want of the poor."

Gerard Booy, minister at Haney, Maple Ridge, B.C., called Calvin "the theologian of the Holy Spirit." Although humanity can learn of God through experiencing creation, Booy noted it is the scriptures that clarify the image of God and focus the reader on Jesus Christ. The Hall's dean, Stephen Farris referred to Calvin's metaphor of the scriptures as spectacles "to allow us to look at creation more clearly."

Knox College, Toronto, held its own in-depth three-day conference in June in co-operation with Emmanuel College. The event offered two streams of study: historical research and ministry practice, and featured American professor Serene Jones, professor and theologian Alister McGrath, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Marilynne Robinson, as well as numerous workshops, music, worship services, and a rare book exhibit.

According to a story circulated by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, public response to the jubilee year exceeded expectations.

"This year has both re-connected Reformed Christians to their roots and to each other," said WARC president and head of the International Patronage Committee, Clifton Kirkpatrick. His committee co-ordinated the Jubilee activities. Plans are underway to redevelop calvin09.org as a source for news and research into the impact of John Calvin's legacy. ■ —with files from Joel Coppetiers, Kathleen Bolton, and WARC

# International Briefs

## A Hero for Empowering Girls



Betty Makoni

In Zimbabwe, men with HIV rape virgin girls believing they will be cured of their disease. Betty Makoni, who is devoted to rescuing such girls, was honoured in November at the 2009 CNN Top 10 Heroes tribute presented at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood.

According to CNN.com, the heroes were chosen by a panel from more than 9,000 viewer nominations. Each of the top 10 received \$25,000, and from those 10, a hero of the year was crowned.

Makoni, who was raped when she was just six years old, created the Girl Child Network in 1998 as a way to protect girls from sexual abuse, and promote education, independence and girls' rights. Through GCN, Makoni has established 700 girls clubs that provide a safe space to talk and share support, and has saved 35,000 girls from rape and abuse.

"We must create a culture of prevention—country to country, woman to woman, girl to girl. That's why I talk; so it doesn't have to happen again," Makoni told the *Record* in an interview in 2006.

"I am a great admirer of Betty. Her courage and unwavering commitment to the cause of women is humbling," said Margaret Zondo, senior administrator of International Ministries.

To read more about Makoni, visit [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) and search for *Creating a Culture of Prevention*. To learn more about the Girl Child Network, visit: [girlchildnetworkworldwide.org/ed](http://girlchildnetworkworldwide.org/ed).

## Hymnist Dies

Fred Kaan, author of *For the Healing of the Nations, Now Let Us From this Table Rise*, and a plethora of other 20th century

hymns died on Oct. 4 in England at the age of 80. Dutch-born Kaan was a minister in Britain's United Reformed Church and penned lyrics for more than 200 hymns, many of which are included in the Presbyterian Book of Praise. Kaan had worked for the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and was deeply concerned about peace and social justice—themes that were often at the heart of his hymns.—with files from the *Christian Century* and *Stainer & Bell*

## Justice Organization Condemns Massacre in Philippines

A Presbyterian-supported justice organization has condemned the murder of 57 people on Nov. 23, calling it "a grim testimony to the pervading culture of impunity and lack of respect for human rights in the Philippines."

The slain victims, including women and journalists, were discovered in a shallow grave in Maguindanao province in southern Philippines. Two were members of the Union of People's Lawyers in Mindanao, a partner organization of Kairos, the Toronto-based ecumenical justice organization.

In a public statement, Kairos criticized ongoing political killings despite the work of a [stopthekillings.org](http://stopthekillings.org) campaign launched in Canada in 2007, and a call to action from the UN. The group urged the Canadian government to call on Filipino authorities "to ensure that human rights are upheld."

The killings are believed to be a recent addition to the country's election-related death toll. About 130 people were killed during the 2007 polls.

In the wake of the massacre, the Filipino government, headed by President Gloria Macapagal, has cracked down on the powerful Ampatuan family, whose supporters are suspected of carrying out the murders. ■ —C.P. with files from Kairos and Reuters



# Committed Christians

Ways of catchin' him a fish. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

## Rappin' with Jesus: The Good News According to the Four Brothers

Vaguely along the same lines as Eugene Peterson's *The Message* this is obviously not a direct translation of the Bible but rather an attempt at a paraphrase in modern language: "So, they really shouldn't be messing with us. But that's okay. We don't want to diss'em. They need some money, go and catch me a fish and when you look in its mouth you'll find a dime. Drop it on the tax collector."—Jesus.

Search [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca) for "Rappin' with Jesus"

## Music for the Soul

This chart-topping CD is as calming as it is beautiful. Originally released as *Music for Paradise* this album reached number one on the Billboard charts in the States. [chantmusicforthesoul.com](http://chantmusicforthesoul.com)

## Praise Ponies

Perhaps like me you're just drawn to ridiculous Christian kitsch or perhaps

you just happen to be so uptight that your kids can't play with anything unless somebody stamps a Bible verse on it. Well, if that describes you then here's the answer to your prayers. Collect all three: Faith, Love and Hope! [christianshirtshop.com/typpsf.html](http://christianshirtshop.com/typpsf.html) Hey, just in case that's not crazy enough for you: Search [zazzle.ca](http://zazzle.ca) for "Jesus loves me lamb shoes"

## Alice Cooper—Christian

Although Vincent Damon Furnier (The band is actually Alice Cooper) has been very open about his Christian faith, I am always surprised to find people that are shocked by this. I suppose I understand. After all, the guy does go out on stage and sit in a fake electric chair with a giant boa constrictor around his neck (and worsted yet, wears makeup). While Furnier has made a very profitable career out of playing the bad guy in self-proclaimed vaudeville-rock, he is also a committed

Christian. Search [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) for "Alice Cooper: his conversion"

## Quotation for the Month: Proverbs 25:24

Ah, the book of Proverbs. Along with Judges this book is easily the favorite of most pre-teen boys. And yet ... there's still a lot of important wisdom in these pages even for us older people, like this little gem: "Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife."

And of course, feel free to switch "wife" with "husband." ■

Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.

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# A Life's Work Nears Completion

Taiwan's largest ethnic group to get Bible in own language.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

REV. DR. PAUL MCLEAN spends most of his days behind a computer screen, surrounded by piled Bibles, biblical commentaries and translation notes. From his Canadian office, where he works during eight or nine months of each year, he keeps in touch with his Hakka-speaking colleagues in Taiwan through email and software that allows them to share translated Bible passages. By the end of 2010, the team hopes to release a complete edition of the Bible in Taiwanese Hakka. It will be the culmination of nearly 25 years of work.

There are about three million Hakka people in Taiwan—about 17 per cent of Taiwan's total population—making them

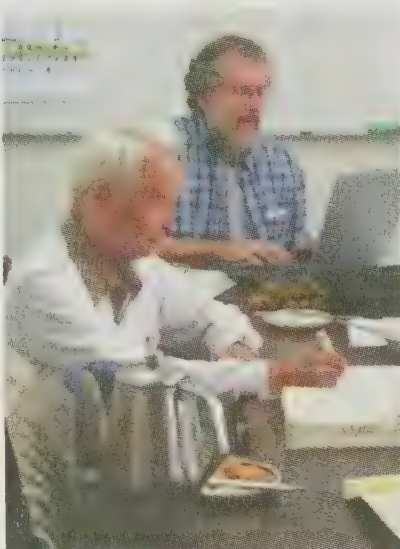
**By the end of 2010, the team hopes to release a complete edition of the Bible in Taiwanese Hakka**

the country's largest ethnic group. Most who are Christian are Presbyterian, and are part of a fledgling Hakka presbytery.

"In 1982, my family and I felt the call to Taiwan," says McLean. "In conversation with ministers in the board of world missions, through our own reading of scripture and through an invitation to come and help, we felt a deep sense in our hearts that God wanted us to cross cultures, learn new languages and offer gifts to God and the church in Taiwan."

His wife and then 18-month-old son set off for the island in the China Sea. His second son was born in Taiwan, and his third in Canada when he and his wife were on furlough.

After more than two decades of



translation work, McLean says his Hakka is "pretty good," but his main focus is double-checking Hakka translations against the Bible's original Hebrew and Greek.

"There are very few Hakka Christians," McLean says. "Only two or three in 1,000 are Christian. But those who are Christians are very devoted to God and to the mission of church, devoted in faith and Christian action. It's been a joy to me to work with a team of translators with unity of mind and heart to make the scriptures available to the church, and for their sacrifices and commitment to the task."



Elder Liao Tet-thiam and Paul McLean (top left), the Hakka New Testament and Psalms, published in 1993 (top right), the Hakka translation team, Rev. Chen Chun-chung (bottom)



## Map of Taiwan



McLean heads to Taiwan a few times each year to compare notes and see his colleagues in person. Now that a complete version of the Bible is in sight, he says enthusiasm is high among the members of the team, especially in the heart of Liao Tet-thiam, a 90-year-old elder who has been working on the translation since he was 65.

McLean's work is funded by Presbyterians Sharing, and is conducted in partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Bible Society in Taiwan. ■

*Paul McLean and the translation team are based in the city of Chung-li, in Tao-yuan County in the north. They meet five days a week in a small Sunday school classroom in the Chung-li Presbyterian Church. On weekends, McLean is often preaching and visiting churches throughout Taiwan.*

*For more on Taiwan, see page 27 for a story by Ted Siverns.*

### TAIWAN INFO

LOCATION: Eastern Asia

SIZE: 35,980 square km

CAPITAL: Taipei

CLIMATE: Tropical and marine, with persistent cloudiness year-round and rainy season from June to August.

TOTAL POPULATION: 23 million

HAKKA POPULATION: About 3 million. The Hakka people are the descendants of Chinese Hakka people (a subset of the Han people) who fled the Chinese mainland. Many are farmers in the mountain foothills, although they can be found throughout the social strata in any number of occupations.

ETHNIC GROUPS: 84% Taiwanese (including Hakka), 14% Chinese, 2% indigenous

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 77.96 years

BIRTH RATE: 8.99 births/1,000 population

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 5.35 deaths/1,000 live births

RELIGIONS: 93% Buddhist and Taoist, 4.5% Christian, 2.5% other.

*Courtesy of the CIA World Factbook*

### More PCC Missionaries in Taiwan

- Rev. Murray Garvin and Louise Gamble are retired missionaries of the PCC serving now as volunteer missionaries. Garvin teaches English at Yushan Theological College and Seminary, which trains most aboriginal ministers for the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Gamble teaches religious education for the pastoral care department of the Tam-Kang High School in Tamsui.
- Rev. Sidney Chang is a retired minister of the PCC working as a volunteer in the General Assembly office of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in Taipei. Chang maintains the PCT's website and translates material for the web from English to Chinese and vice versa.
- Rev. Dr. Michael Tai, a retired PCC minister working as an associate missionary, is dean of the College of Medical Humanities and Social Sciences and teaches medical ethics at Chung Shan Medical University in Taichung City.



# Smoke and Mirrors

It is hard to grasp the truth in Nicaragua. BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD

THE HIGH BEAMS of the pick-up force their way through the muggy heat of an early morning in Managua until they find their prey. There is fear on the streets of this beleaguered Central American capital. Armed youth pile over the sides of the hitch, home-made arms holstered at their waists, encircling the helpless victims of their assault. Their sights set, they move in for the kill.

Their weapons of choice are spray cans, hired to scour the city and cover any and all of the illegal opposition political graffiti about the current Sandinista government.

I am in Managua, Nicaragua for my work with Presbyterian World Service and Development. I have been coming here for three years to accompany and monitor the agriculture, children's rights, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, and education projects supported by Canadian Presbyterians through PWS&D.

From conversations on the streets, many people feel betrayed by a government that 30 years ago fought its way to power on a platform of pluralism, popular participation and mobilization. Participation is encouraged, but only if it is in support of the government.

Many feel that free speech in Nicaragua has been severely restricted since the election of Daniel Ortega to the presidency after a 17-year hiatus. Ortega was previously president during the Sandinista Revolution of 1979. He seeded power in 1990 through democratic elections.

With no real opposition allowed in the country against government policies, beatings and brutal physical attacks against intellectuals, journalists and civil rights members are frequent here now. Political polarization is unavoidable—you are either with the



Sandinista party signage, Managua

government or against it; there is no in-between.

The November 2008 municipal elections across the country are at the heart of much of the tension after the government disqualified two opposi-

**With no legal opposition allowed in the country against government policies, beatings and brutal physical attacks against intellectuals, journalists and civil rights members are frequent here now**

tion parties from the ballot and prohibited all highly respected national and international elections observers in order to carry out fraudulent results.

Daniel Ortega's election back to office brought with it an initial surge of hope among the majority of Nicaraguans who struggle each day to get a roof over their head and food on the table. Donor countries were thrilled by an ambitious and exciting social action plan laid out by the admin-

istration to tackle extreme poverty, stimulate growth in the countryside, provide healthcare to every Nicaraguan, and get every child in school. This was something to be excited about, and many still are, with good reason. In the poorest neighbourhoods of Managua, people are able to see a doctor, sometimes for the first time, enrolment in schools has increased dramatically throughout the country, and the government has tried to stimulate growth for small farmers.

The process, however, has soured many, once believers at the outset. Through the smoke and mirrors that is the media in Nicaragua, one's headlights cannot penetrate enough to know where the truth really lies. But no one I spoke with disagrees with the desire to express themselves without living in fear. ■

*You can reach Alexander at [amacdonald@presbyterian.ca](mailto:amacdonald@presbyterian.ca). Read about Presbyterian World Service and Development work in Nicaragua:*

[presbyterian.ca/pwsd/programs/ca/nica](http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/programs/ca/nica)





1. Georgina presents Harvey Self with a chicken as a token of thanks  
 2. Worship at General Assembly  
 3. Dora Asam 4. Kids of Gambaga  
 5. Dancing in Navrongo 6. Blind students at Garu 7. Namisi stirs a batch of palm oil soap





# Boogie to the Front

GHANA IS RICH IN SPIRITUALITY; POOR IN MUCH ELSE. BY JAYNE SELF

## SETTING: ABETIFI, GHANA.

Steepled stone church with balconies and soaring ceilings. Painted murals along the front of the sanctuary. On the right, an elevated, dark-wood pulpit; on the left, a polished brass (or is it gold?) lectern shaped like an eagle. Centre-front, a lace-covered altar and three rows of chairs facing the congregation. Clergy in heavy gowns. Choir in gowns and tasseled mortarboards. Overhead screen and sound system. Cool breeze blowing through the open doors.

We sit in the front row, a large expanse of marble floor separating us from the clergy-packed front. The overhead screen flashes, "Get Jesus." An unexpected drumroll and the praise selection is announced. The congregation rises.

The clergy vacate their seats on the podium and swirl around the open area in front of us. Ladies in brightly coloured dresses and men in traditional cloth boogie to the front. The choir sweeps down from the balcony, joining the excitement. Ladies wave white hankies. Men kick up their heels. The drums thunder.

We've been alerted to the possibility of people dancing in church, but being a staid Canadian Presbyterian, I envisioned a modest shuffle. Not gowned clergy lifting their hands and shouting to the Lord.

It reminds me of King David dancing before the Ark of

the Covenant while his wife, Michal, grumbled. How inappropriate. How irreverent, she had whined.

How marvelous! They dance through the praise song. They later dance through the offering. And by then we have mastered the rhythm and dance with them.

During his moderatorial address, Right Rev. Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, challenges his church to abandon its long-held traditions.

"Let us do a new thing," he declares. "Let us embrace the new dances of our youth."

Didn't I hear something like that at our General Assembly?

## SETTING: GAMBAGA.

Wood smoke and the aroma of roasted peanuts. Rain-soaked red earth, round grass-roofed huts connected by four-foot high mud walls, trickling stream that weaves between buildings. Ducks, chickens, goats, and kids. Lots of beautiful, eager, smiling kids.

I pull out my camera and begin snapping photos. Karen Plater, our Presbyterian Church chaperone, warns me I could take too many pictures of random kids. But this was day six of our two-week visit to Ghana, and everything I see fascinates me. I must record it.





1. Women refugees in Gambaga 2. Meeting the chief of Gambaga 3. Blind students at Garu

"I prayed and God has sent you to me.  
Why have you stopped sending us money?"

After several hours stuck in a car bumping along a twisty mud road, we arrive at Gambaga, my first authentic African village. A wizened woman sits under a grass-roofed canopy, cooking a mixture of peanuts. She forms the paste into balls the size of marbles and bags them. A little girl—she's small enough to walk under the work table—pays the woman a coin for a bag. She then rips it open and pops peanut balls into her mouth. The other kids under the canopy ham it up for my camera. They giggle delightedly when I show them their digital images.

An old man hurries past us, not even bothering to stop. "That's the chief," says Dan Opong-Wereko, director of development and social services in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

"He's going to change his clothes," he explained. "A chief can't receive

visitors in his farm clothes. He needs to dress up."

A few minutes later we are welcomed into a stuffy room and told to sit on plastic lawn chairs. The chief sits on a cowhide on the floor. He wears a traditional woven smock and holds a wooden staff in his hand. When he nods I snap his picture. Rain drips through the grass roof and runs down my back.

"I prayed and God has sent you to me," he says huskily. Wood smoke is everywhere in Ghana and most northerners we meet speak with a raspy, smoker's voice. "Why have you stopped sending us money?"

We learn that Gambaga has not received any financial support from the Presbyterian Church in Canada in over a year, and his village is in desperate straits. Roofs leak—I can attest to that—and the community is in jeopardy of

losing its clean water because the chief cannot afford the water tariffs. Most importantly though, he must scrimp on his care for the women.

Gambaga is a refugee community where women who have been evicted from their own villages can live in safety. These women have been charged with witchcraft and if the chief does not take them in, they have nowhere to go. While in Gambaga they are given homes, trained to be self-supporting—they are taught to sew—and learn about God's love. Through the ministry they receive, most become Christians and later return to their home villages as living witnesses to God's saving grace.

Sometime in the last year or two the person responsible for tabulating Gambaga's reports died before he could mail the paperwork. Without



the appropriate documentation, this vital ministry might not continue. (Fortunately the forms are found and we bring them back to Canada with us.)

#### SETTING: GARU.

Community-based rehabilitation centre. Vocational skills training block. "Presbyterian World Service and Development" painted on the wall. New, warehouse-style church, classrooms. Cashew trees. Mahogany trees. Rice field. Guinea hens and goats. CBR staff, women and kids.

Our mornings in Ghana start with a hearty bowl of porridge. It fortifies us for the busy day ahead, and in Garu our days are especially busy. CBR director John Olo escorts us to numerous projects he oversees.

At the vocational skills training block, youth aged 15 to 26 (many of them with disabilities) are taught hair-dressing, weaving, batik, soap-making and sewing. Training lasts three years and once graduated, the youth are equipped to run their own cottage

industries and train others.

We visit Georgina and her two apprentices. Georgina is a new bride. Thanks to her lucrative career as a seamstress, she had her pick of the village men. A woman choosing her husband is uncommon in Georgina's world.

Atul and Dora Asam suffer from an unimaginable disability. Both mother and daughter share a rare congenital condition which has left them with tiny, twisted legs. Only two feet tall, they travel together on a specially made three-wheeled bike which they peddle by hand. Yet these courageous women are independent. Atul is a potter. Dora is a seamstress.

Michael is blind. He teaches other blind children to read and write at the CBR's school.

Lamisi is deaf. Until coming to Garu, she was trapped in a world of silence. Although sign language is not practiced in Ghana, Lamisi is now learning to communicate as she acquires self-supporting skills.

One morning during devotions

they discuss the story of Jesus walking on water.

"Can we walk on water too?" asks one youth.

"You do it every day," he is told. "As you overcome your disabilities and create futures for yourselves, you are walking on the waters of poverty and hardship. You are showing others that Jesus is here. And that he still changes lives."

#### SETTING: NAVRONGO.

HIV women's self-help project. Late afternoon. A cement block building on the edge of town. A slim tree encircled with bricks. A goat. Thirty women on benches.

Screaming down bumpy dirt roads—to put it mildly—does not agree with my stomach, so we are late. The sun slips behind the building, creating a sliver of shade. We are introduced to the waiting women. Benches are shifted and we're given the precious place out of the sun. The ladies form a circle and dance for us. They sing and, cupping ►

An HIV women's co-op in Navrongo, where women join together to create income-generating projects.





hands around their mouths, make a loud, shrill noise. My camera lens is foggy after coming from the air-conditioned car into the muggy African afternoon. I wipe it on my t-shirt and madly snap pictures. The circle breaks up and the ladies dance individually.

We've been told dancing is vigorous in the north. This is more than vigorous. It's authentic, tribal. I am enthralled. John Olo dances with them and I note the difference between his dance and theirs. Hands up. Hands out. Hands down. Where you come from defines how you dance, like Celtic vs. Scot. Only we're not in the highlands here.

In time the dancing subsides and we are told about the women's income-generating project. Originally 20 women formed this co-operative. Now there are more than 60 women in their group. They make soap from palm oil. It's a labour-intensive industry that isn't providing the income they need.

These women are HIV-positive. AIDS may not be as devastating an epidemic in Ghana as in other parts of Africa, but it is still a major concern. We soon learn it is not their only concern. Hepatitis B, a virulent blood-borne disease that affects the liver, dominates their conversation.

"Can we be immunized?"

"What if we get sick?"

These women are frightened. They know that Hep B can overwhelm their already weakened immune systems and the results will be catastrophic. Helpless, I sit and listen. I can do nothing except pray that God will somehow provide for them.

At St. Paul's Presbyterian in Cape Coast, the congregation is hosting a Hep B clinic. Come before the service and have your blood tested. If you are Hep B positive, the church will help provide treatment. If you are Hep B negative, you will be immunized. A doctor teaches about Hepatitis B and answers questions.

St. Paul's is a wealthy congregation hundreds of miles from Navrongo. Its members share the same fears as the ladies of Navrongo, but what can they do for the women? Their time and resources are already stretched.

I confess that I've been one of those Christians who sees more value in evangelism than social action. In Canada, where the government meets most of our basic needs, the social gospel hasn't seemed important to me. We have food, health care, and education—our physical needs are well met. It's spiritual

hunger that haunts Canadians. We should focus on the spiritual poverty of our communities.

In Ghana, it's hard to draw that line. Needs are greater than any I've seen in Canada. Apart from a few wealthy donors, resources are slim. No one wants to turn their back on a brother in need, but how much can a few ministries do?

Vastly more than I could ever have thought or imagined.

Armed with God's love and a commitment to value every person, no matter how seemingly unlovable, they reach out. They help meet people's physical needs. They acknowledge everyone's worth. They train people to care for themselves and their families. These ministries opened the doors to people's hearts.

I'm home from Ghana, back in my comfortable Orangeville manse. If it weren't for my reams of pictures, I wonder, would the trip even feel real? I lie awake at night and relive my memories. I ask myself, "What is God calling me to do?" ■

*Jayne Self is a freelance writer based in Orangeville, Ont., and a member of the Word Guild.*

Children of Gambaga.





# TAIWAN

## A Presbyterian Island

GEORGE MCKAY'S WORK IS STILL FELT IN TAIWAN. BY TED SIVERNS

**THE CONNECTION** between Taiwan and Canada goes back to the Canadian Presbyterian Church when, with its first foreign missionary appointment, it sent George Leslie McKay to Tamsui in northern Taiwan (then known as Formosa). He arrived on New Year's Eve, 1871; there was no party, no common language, no immediate friends, no congregation. McKay had a deep faith and a bag of primitive dental tools which allowed him to pull teeth from thousands of people who suffered dental pain. Learning from children, McKay became fluent in Taiwanese and established a number of still important schools, a hospital, and some 60 churches. McKay also did what was unthinkable at that time and married an aborigine named Tiu Chang-mia or Minnie. McKay and the mission board (who wanted matters handled decently and in order) did not always agree, and in correspondence McKay insisted that the ways of China were not the ways of Taiwan: "This is not China; it is Taiwan."

Taiwan is internationally regarded for its medical care. The three Presbyterian hospitals, though there are branches as well, are noted for their care, the quality of their staff, and the fact that they will turn no one away.

The Taiwanese have created a country that is the envy of many. Much of this is due to the dynamic Presbyterian ►



Presbyterian Church in Taiwan  
High School in Tamsui.





1. Rev. Frank Lu in Taipei 2. National Museum in Taipei 3. Grace Wang and friend at Sun Moon Lake 4. Ted with students at Yu-Shan Seminary 5. At Chiang Kai-Chek Former Residence in Taipei 6. International guests of PCT at Lin Museum 7. A Taipei street





Ted and Betty Sivers with a statue of Buddha and his lion protector at Chungua Church at Purhulan.

## The PCT is a church of praise and singing, said the general secretary and it was by our observation true throughout the island

Church in Taiwan. Though Christians make up only four per cent of the population, Presbyterians are 75 per cent of that number. The PCT is larger than the PCC and is a presence across the country with its hospitals, schools and universities. There are many vibrant congregations ministering to the needy, the aboriginal people in the mountain villages, and the 60 per cent of the aborigines who live in the cities. Changshan congregation and its pastor, Chen Hsin-Liang, started several companies in order to provide jobs for the aboriginal people and loans so people could find reasonable accommodations.

An emphasis has been placed on children's ministry, but because the

government is providing more and more programs for kindergarten-age children the churches have switched to after-school programs. Those who attend meet the gospel in songs, stories and genuine acceptance. Most of the children come from a mix of backgrounds that include Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist; and it is a delight to see happy children learning new skills and enjoying their time together.

On behalf of the PCC, I was privileged to present a gift to the PCT. It seemed appropriate that the gift was a Canadian First Nations talking stick. Only the person holding the stick could speak. Perhaps the microphone at general assembly is our contemporary version of the talking

stick. I was impressed with the efficiency of the assembly as 525 people assembled at the McKay Memorial Hospital in Taipei. The debate appeared to be healthy and included considerable humour. Soon we felt more like friends than visitors. Worship, especially singing, played an important part in the assembly. This year saw the introduction of a new hymn book that was received with great enthusiasm as several choirs gave a taste of its variety. The PCT is a church of praise and singing, said the general secretary, and it was by our observation true throughout the island.

The PCT assembly meets every other year, which seems to be just ►



## Taiwan is Not China

BUT IT IS WHAT CHINA SHOULD BE.

TAIWAN, along with another island, was the settlement China made with Japan after losing the first Sino-Japanese War in 1895. This led to 50 years of Japanese rule, which ended in 1945.

In 1946, the Nationalists of Chiang Kai Shek fled China, having lost the civil war to Mao and the Communists. With the remains of his army and his followers—in total, two million—Chiang took over Taiwan and subjected the Taiwanese people to his “legitimate government” of all China while regrouping to recapture the mainland from the Communists, which was supposed to take a few years. The precipitating event was the massacre of tens of thousands on February 28, 1947. The 228 Incident is a sort of remembrance day for Taiwanese independence.

While the size of Vancouver Island, Taiwan has a population of 26 million. The aborigines of Malay-Polynesian stock date back as much as 20,000 years. The majority, however, have come from mainland China to escape hardship and to find freedom. As the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan insists, “at no time did these settlers come to Taiwan with the idea of contributing to the territorial expansion of China.”

The PCT has been very much involved in this issue of the sovereignty of Taiwan and has issued public statements about human rights, church and state, the current relationship between Taiwan and China, and an anti-nuclear declaration. Through the years the PCC has supported the PCT in these causes. There are always those who argue that the church should not be involved in politics but Calvin (and others) taught us that submission to the state is but a derived obedience subject to the only absolute authority, that of Jesus Christ. To resist the state is sometimes an imperative. Certainly many of us in the PCC prayed for Dr. C. M. Kao, former general secretary of the PCT, who was jailed for



five years for choosing not to obey the state. Before him, Dr. Kao's administrative assistant, Joyce Shih, was imprisoned; Joyce continues to provide support to the general assembly office and general secretary Andrew Chang.

The Canadian government has not recognized a free Taiwan. Only recently was Taiwan allowed observer status in the World Health Organization. Canada and Taiwan are similar in so many ways that you could conclude that we should be natural allies. We both have small populations sitting next to large populations. Both countries dare not deviate much from the policies of their neighbours. If Canada is thought to be populated by a people who are polite and helpful, this is an even greater characteristic of the Taiwanese. Time and again, people rose to give a seat to these aging visitors and even to help with our too much luggage or to help with directions. We envied the modern roads, the efficient high-speed trains and in Taipei, the mass rapid transit.

The lack of official diplomatic ties leaves Taiwan in a diplomatically vulnerable state. American rapprochement with China has had benefits, to be sure, but at the expense of Taiwan. The time is overdue for the PCC, along with our partners in ministry, to pressure the Canadian government to do what is right and recognize Taiwan as a country, welcoming it into the family of nations. David Kilgour, a retired member of parliament for Edmonton-Beaumont and member of the PCC said it well: “Taiwan is what China should be.”—*Ted Siverns*



An aborigine church at Purhulan.

about right. Within the denomination there was discussion as to a priority for the next two years and the decision to focus on ministry to seniors. Interestingly, the theme is not that of the moderator but of the whole church. Graduates from the colleges are appointed to their first congregation, and though it may be impractical to do this in today's Canada, by not doing so we have lost much.

The PCT's 1,200 congregations and 220,000 members make a significant impact on the country. The PCT is credited with the first school, the first printing press and the first hospital. The PCT is an ecumenical denomination with membership in many international church organizations. Like our own denomination, it cares for the people of China and looks for the day when relations are normalized.

We were pleased to see PCC members still providing guidance in Taiwan: Murray Garvin teaching English at Yushan, Louise Gamble at Tam Kang school, and Sidney Chang translating in the general assembly office (though we missed Bible translator Paul McLean by hours).

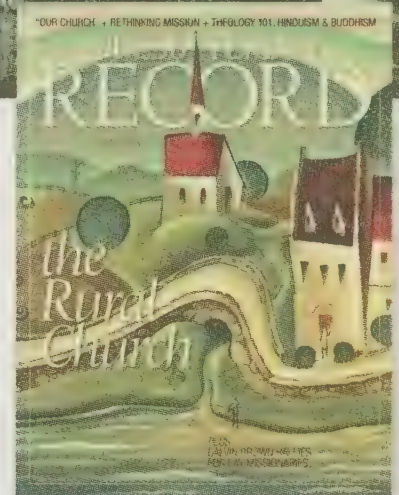
See page 19 for more on Taiwan. ■

*Rev. Dr. Ted Siverns is a visiting scholar at Tainan Theological College and Seminary. He and his wife, Betty are in Taiwan until June.*





# The Church on Earth



*"I can find no clear warrant in scripture for the practice of ordination to Word and Sacrament as we now practice it." So declared Rev. David Webber last October, reviving a debate that has long simmered in the Presbyterian Church. For second thoughts, the Record requested two opinions on Webber's challenge.*



# Centre Road

RESPONDING TO DAVID WEBBER'S CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH.

BY RAY HODGSON AND C. JOYCE HODGSON

In our presbytery, Lambton-West Middlesex, we have a church named Centre Road. We haven't done the research to know for sure, but we bet it's the only church in our denomination with that name. We have enough churches named St. Andrew's to shake a stick at and we know that somewhere in that church's history is a Church of Scotland relationship that led to that name. And then there are the churches named Knox. Again, in their history is a Free Church relationship that led to that choice. However, we would argue that our Centre Road church spells out much more clearly than either St. Andrew's or Knox, our particular church heritage. Let us explain.

When we became members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1973—yes, it was the year of the previous “new” hymnbook—we were told to expect the church to be a middle way between churches that were theologically liberal or conservative. We would find people of both persuasions but ultimately, people in this denomination chose a centre road with respect to theology. Let us make this clearer. It was a centre road but not a narrow road: it allowed for a variety of persuasions but no extremes. And that has been our experience of this church. Examples? There are so many to choose from! Our most recent subordinate standard, the *Living Faith* or *Foi Vivante* and soon to have its own Korean translation is a walk-away bestseller for our denomination. Not only our church but others have appreciated the middle ground of Reformed theology it clearly and poetically circumscribes with Christian charity and clarity.

It is what defines us as a Reformed and reforming Presbyterian church, continuing its witness in urban, rural and remote places within Canada and with our partners around the world. In our churches are couples who have chosen to worship with us as a middle ground between a Lutheran married to a Baptist or a Roman Catholic married to a United Church member. We have a reformed structure to our worship, done “decently and in

order,” that appeals to our ecumenical brothers and sisters from more formal liturgical backgrounds. Isn't that a good thing, a gift or grace we offer to the ecumenical community! And we have a solid biblical basis for everything we do: the centrality of the scriptures, a strong Reformed approach that appeals to our ecumenical brothers and sisters from more gospel-centred backgrounds. And isn't that a good thing, too?

We read with interest David Webber's account in the October 2009 *Record* of his visit to the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and followed his directions to its website. There we were able to read the new polity changes that he referred to in the article, the five different routes to ordination which allowed for communion to be offered to all who wanted it, whether they were in an urban, rural, aboriginal or truly remote location. There was provision for the sacramental expression of their faith, whether through their own denomination or the inter-church co-operation occurring in rural areas. The church there was taking seriously its mandate to “feed my sheep” (John 21:17), a reference commonly heard at the ordination of a minister.

What we appreciated even more was that the PCANZ consulted with its ecumenical partners and, as a result, developed a new way of thinking about ordination that didn't destroy long-held Reformed theological traditions that were part of its heritage. As members of the World Association of Reformed Churches (soon to be called the World Communion of Reformed Churches) and as members also of other partnerships within Canada and around the world, it is important to ensure that whatever changes we make as a denomination are theologically sound. It took years for the church in New Zealand to study, craft and endorse its new path. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has always been known for its slow and deliberate thinking about issues that are central to our faith and witness.





## The Presbyterian Church in Canada has always been known for its slow and deliberate thinking about issues that are central to our faith and witness

David Webber has shown us that there may be ecumenical partnerships that can help us think through our own difficulties. We will not find all solutions equally helpful. We need ways that won't become speed bumps or barriers along our broad centre road. We need ways that will continue to offer the gift of apostolic succession—historic continuity with the early church through the teaching and authority given to the apostles and through them to others through the laying on of hands (see Ephesians 2:15-20; Matthew 16:18-19; John 20:19-23; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; Acts 8:14-24 and Acts 6:1-6)—through ordination that is central to our Reformed understanding of ordained ministry as outlined in our subordinate standards, a gift that might get lost or obscured if we are not careful. Let us illustrate its centrality to our church.

First, in the Nicene Creed we affirm that “we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church,” a phrase that is then picked up and expounded upon in *Living Faith* at 7.1.5 and following: “The church is apostolic. It is founded on Christ and the apostles and in continuity with their teachings.” As we continue to read in that section, “The church is present when the word is truly preached, the sacraments rightly administered, and as it orders its life according to the word of God.” Under the next section in the chapter on ministry at 7.2.3 we affirm: “Ministers of Word and Sacrament are set apart to preach the gospel, celebrate baptism and holy communion and exercise pastoral care in Christ's name. Their ministry is an order that continues the work of the apostles. Christ preserves this order today by calling to it both men and women. The church recognizes this calling in the act of ordination.”

The Westminster Confession of Faith does not have a section on the ministry; but it does affirm, “there be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and

the supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained.”

John Calvin's *Institutes* carefully lists and defines the various tasks, duties and purposes of pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets and evangelists in the church. He asserts, “For as our teachers correspond to the ancient prophets, so do our pastors to the apostles.” He later adds: “But what about the pastors? Paul is speaking not only of himself but of them all when he says, ‘This is how men should regard us, as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God’ [1 Corinthians 4:1] ... From these and similar passages which frequently occur, we may infer that in the office of the pastors also there are these two particular functions: to proclaim the gospel and to administer the sacraments ... That is, they have been set over the church not to have a sinecure but, by the doctrine of Christ to instruct the people to true godliness, to administer the sacred mysteries and to keep and exercise upright discipline.”

We know changes are coming but we need to remember Augustine's aphorism: “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, diversity; in all things, charity.” Ordination for the dispensing of the sacraments is an essential. David Webber suggests three changes that need to be addressed by the church. “The first is we have to begin to think and act interdenominationally” and we couldn't agree more. We need to consider the breadth as well as the depth of the church and seek common agreement where that is possible. We are not the only party involved in the agreement and so we must listen with respect to our brothers and sisters in the faith. We think that means also that we should not embark on a solution to a perhaps temporary and isolated problem by a change that is so fundamental to our Reformed understanding of what it means to be the church.

Secondly, David says, “Rural people need to be practically equipped for ministry in their rural context.” They do. We have tended to reserve ordination as the end of a process, which is thorough in affirming an inner and outer call to ministry, with affirmations by presbytery, an assembly-approved education and finally the actual act of ordination by the laying on of hands by the ministers of Word and Sacrament of the presbytery. We agree with David that “in service education” seems to be the key element that needs to be reconsidered and ➤



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## William the Conqueror

Conquered England and turned the King's English into French

## William Tyndale

Translated the Bible into English

## William Shakespeare

English playwright and poet

## William Penn

English Quaker who founded Pennsylvania on the principle of religious freedom

## William Gates

Founder of Microsoft and co-founder of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

## Alfred Nobel

Inventor of dynamite and founder of the Nobel Prizes

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reconfigured. Other denominations have found it necessary to ordain non-stipendiary or bivocational ministers: those whose income derives from other sources, like a pension, private income or "tent" ministers whose income, like Paul's, came from other sources than the congregation. Where we differ is that, unlike David, we believe that ordination to Word and Sacrament is essential; the way to get there can be changed.

"The third change that is absolutely necessary for rural ministry has to do with how we approach the ministry of Word and Sacrament," David says. If we want to continue our present understanding of the church and its ministry, we cannot "go a different route" as he suggests and remain on the same road, let alone a broad centre road, with our ecumenical brothers and sisters. There is much hard work that needs to be done to be a church that continues its witness in urban, rural and remote places within Canada and with our partners around the world. Let's do that hard work, thoughtfully, deliberately and with full attention to who we are as a church and whose we are as the people of God.

Calvin writes in book four of *Institutes*, "Whoever, therefore, either is trying to abolish this order of which we speak and this kind of government, or discounts it as not necessary, is striving for the undoing or rather the ruin and destruction of the church. For neither the light and heat of the sun, nor food and drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life as the apostolic and pastoral office is necessary to preserve the church on earth." ■

Rev. C. Joyce Hodgson is minister at Laurel-Lea-St. Matthew's and Rev. Dr. Ray Hodgson at St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont. According to the 2009 Acts and Proceedings there is only one Knox, Centre Road in the PCC; though there are three Centrals.



# Priesthood of all Believers

RESPONDING TO DAVID WEBBER'S CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH. **BY PETER BUSH**

Over the last 25 years, Canadian Presbyterians have made a subtle, yet significant change in our understanding of the role the Book of Forms ("the rules") plays. A moment at the 1999 General Assembly in Waterloo, Ont., stands, for me, as the sign of that change. A motion to add to the Book of Forms: "An elder may resign from the session by placing in writing before the session the reasons for such a resignation" was debated. Of course elders can resign! Everyone knows people have the right to resign from any position; by adding this we legislated common sense. This addition indicates that Presbyterians see the Book of Forms as defining what can be done and how it is to be done; a significant shift from an earlier understanding which saw the Book of Forms as a permission-giving document stating "within these limits, go be church." We have moved from seeing "the rules" as channel markers indicating the space within which the church and its members were free to function, to being the procedure manual defining what must be done and how to do it. The former approach created space for presbyteries and congregations to take pragmatic steps in addressing ministry needs and opportunities. The present approach demands the rule book be quoted in defense of any new initiative or experiment.

David Webber in his October 2009 article on the rural church contends new pragmatic approaches need to be adopted to do rural and small town ministry. I would argue a new pragmatism is required across the denomination—in rural areas and small towns, in urban centres and suburban neighbourhoods, in theological colleges and the workings of the national church. In the past Canadian Presbyterians,

recognizing not all ministry situations were created the same, adopted a variety of models to address the range of contexts in which they sought to have a ministry presence. The examples of pragmatism Webber proposes are not new. We have done much of this before or have within our polity ways to give permission for it to happen.

Developing ecumenical connections is essential in a post-denominational Christianity. Some urban Presbyterian churches have opened their doors to non-Presbyterian congregations made up of Africans or Asians. These relationships benefit both sides economically, the host congregation receiving payment and the tenant congregation freed from needing to maintain a facility of their own. Sadly, the connections often remain purely economic. Would it not be a powerful statement about the multi-ethnic nature of the church to have the black African Pentecostal minister of the tenant congregation participate in leading communion in the Presbyterian host congregation on Worldwide Communion Sunday?

We boast about our commitment to ecumenical relationships. Our most frequent ecumenical dance partners are the United Church, the Anglicans and the Lutherans. That is like going to a dance and dancing only with our cousins: nice and safe, no toes get stepped on, but it is pretty boring. The adrenaline rush comes from dancing with people very different than ourselves: Pentecostals, Baptists, Alliance, those with no denominational affiliation, many of whom are at the cutting edge of urban and suburban ministry. Dancing with them will teach us new dance steps, and help move us towards more effective ministries. ➤



## The time is right to allow experimental models of theological education to surface and be tried

Canadian Presbyterians in the past danced with a variety of ecumenical partners. In the 1890s Canadian Presbyterians came within a hair's breadth of being a founding denomination, along with the Baptists, of Toronto Bible Training School, which became Ontario Bible College, and is now Tyndale College and Seminary.

Present-day theological education is a product of the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement beginning in 18th-century Europe. The rise of postmodernism, a world view gaining momentum among youth and 20-somethings today, challenges Enlightenment thought. (To test this: listen for teenagers using "random" and "ironic" as statements that something is fun and interesting.) A second influence helping form present-day theological education was the push to re-make theological colleges into professional schools offering professional degrees. However this is a very recent shift in the life of the church, for not until the late 19th century did clergy think of themselves as professionals. A number of contemporary writers within the church are urging reflection on what is lost when clergy are professionalized.

The models of theological education refined over the last 250 years are being challenged. Full credit is due to those theological colleges which have entered a process of self-examination looking towards the re-forming of the educational process. The training of future clergy has profound implications for the congregations these yet-to-be-trained clergy will serve. The time is right to allow experimental models of theological education to surface and be tried. Some of these experiments will take place outside the walls and the direction of the theological colleges.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has done this before. In the early 20th century, as thousands of non-English speaking immigrants poured onto the prairies, Presbyterians sought out spiritually gifted people with a heart for God and ordained them for ministry without their having been to

theological college. Ministry needs on the field trumped the established rules.

We are not in a position to know if the church is living through another Reformation or not; that is for future historians to determine. What is clear is that some of the present upheaval in the church (the emerging church, for example) is completing what the Reformation of 500 years ago began. The time has come to fully celebrate the priesthood of all believers.

It is unconscionable that we allow congregations to go years without someone in their midst able to administer the sacraments. In the sacraments God says, "Here I am acting." The sacraments were not given to ministers, but to the church. A truth recognized each time the session, as leaders of the church, "approves" a baptism or celebration of the Lord's supper. Ruling elders, who are ordained, join with teaching elders, to ensure the sacraments are treated with reverence.

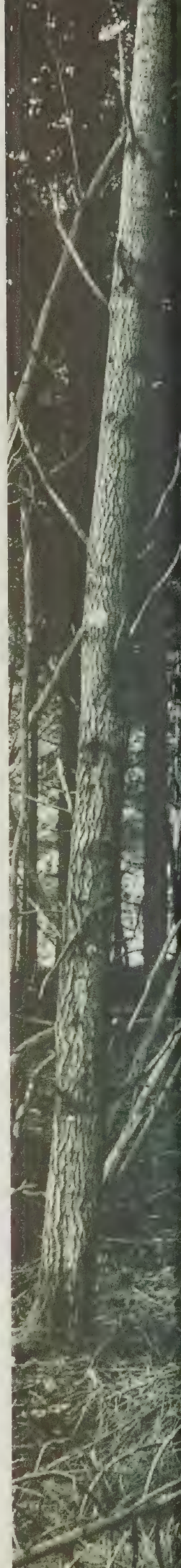
Which makes more sense pastorally: to have a minister who does not know the congregation drive 300 kilometers for the baptism of a child she has never met before and will most likely never see again, or to have a long-standing elder, who taught the child's parents in Sunday school and who is the family's elder do the baptism?

Which speaks more powerfully about a God who came to be one with us: to have a minister who is properly accredited but who speaks no Tagalog (the first language of most Filipinos) administer communion in English in a Tagalog-speaking congregation; or to have an elder who is recognized for her spiritual insight lead communion in the language of the congregation?

Ensuring that all Presbyterian congregations have regular access to all the means of grace will require thought and planning, but surely any answer will include a rediscovery of the Reformation banner proclaiming "the priesthood of all believers."

Throughout our history Canadian Presbyterians have responded to the changes in the ministry landscape with pragmatism and experimentation. Today as we face a new set of ministry opportunities and challenges, the time has come to again be pragmatic and innovative in finding ways to effectively carry out the mission Jesus Christ gave to the church. ■

*Rev. Peter Bush is teaching elder at Westwood, Winnipeg.*







## Where in the World is God?

THEOLOGY 101, SECOND SEMESTER. BY JOSEPH MCLELLAND

**T**he 2009 series Theology 101 offered two distinct views, one on Christian theology, the other on world religions. We follow this with a series presenting a variety of major theological topics, written by different authors throughout the year. The general theme is, Where in the World is God?—our sense of God's presence, seeing Christian faith as a response to the traces of the divine in our world.

Most of us realize that speaking of God is most peculiar, since we're talking about something invisible and inaudible. When we say "word of God" we mean the words in a book or from the pulpit—human language about God. And when we claim that these human words become also God's own word, we're still left with questions about how this happens, whether all the words are God's, etc.

The most pressing question of our time is not whether the universe will survive much longer, but ►

online extra

**WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GOD?**  
THEOLOGY 101 (SECOND SEMESTER) CONTINUES BY POPULAR DEMAND INTO 2010. LED AGAIN BY REV. DR. JOSEPH MCLELLAND AND REV. DR. JOHN VISSERS ALONG WITH REV. DR. PAM MCCARROLL AND REV. DR. RICHARD TOPPING. AS BEFORE, A STUDY GUIDE CAN BE FOUND EACH MONTH AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)



whether this life is all there is. Is there a hidden dimension to human being, a “Beyond in the midst of our life” as Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it? Is there life after death? Then there is the most difficult challenge for Christians, the so-called “problem of evil.” Why is there such inhumanity and violence if this is God’s good creation? In turn, this makes us re-think God’s very nature, especially “omnipotence.” Our forebears thought of God as able to do anything, although theologians never made such a claim. This popular

i.e. from Ireland) was dubbed *pultes Scotorum*, “Scots porridge!” So this is one doctrine worth recalling.

The crucial concern is how we discover God’s presence in our everyday life. It’s easy to restrict this presence to Sundays and church events—and even there it’s not so easy to say exactly what “presence” means! Certainly we know we live in a secular age, when Christianity is no longer privileged by the state. But does not the Bible itself teach us that only God is holy, and therefore His word will be heard in

strange way of talking about oneself? The European term “Reformed” is surely better—it describes our theology (which includes polity). Perhaps governance is less important than we think—all those courts and committees and meetings and bureaucracy. Of course bureaucrats are always an easy target, and we mustn’t blame them for the current state of the church. What if it’s more the blame of clergy and laity together, who have taken theology too lightly, have failed to appreciate its seriousness (our beliefs drive our actions), and so have not applied themselves to the “school of Christ?”

This series is an invitation to enter that school, to study the essential beliefs that make us Christian. It’s not a case of rehearsing church history; our motto is “always reforming” (reformed and always to be reformed). This means we need to explore traditional beliefs in light of modern knowledge and needs. If we have outgrown that twisted form of predestination, for example, what does the proper doctrine of God’s will and power have to teach us today? And if the problem of evil denies that God is tyrant, how are we to understand a good creation in which inhumanity and suffering seem to predominate? What if the ruling idea of God as absolutely omnipotent is just wrong, displacing the gospel image of a God of suffering love? The temptation is to think we can identify God easily, name God and own God. But the cross is a broken symbol, a “dangerous memory” (in the words of Jurgen Moltmann) that defies definition. The crucified God stretches ordinary language to the breaking point, resists systematic theology, casts us into doxology and prayer. So good theology should be an invitation to “the practice of the presence of God” in the everyday world as well as in church “service.” ■

*Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland is professor emeritus at McGill University, Montreal. His latest book is Pluralism Without Relativism: Religious Studies a la Mode, Clement Publishing.*

## [A] popular fallacy continues, a naive supernaturalism, turning God into a kind of celestial tyrant or engineer

fallacy continues, a naive supernaturalism, turning God into a kind of celestial tyrant or engineer, and therefore it’s easy to blame God for calamities, including illness. Most “atheists” stop believing because they have never progressed beyond this childish idea of God, which is easy to reject.

A famous passage in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* has the intellectual Ivan arguing with his pious brother Alyosha. Ivan cites cruelty to children as evidence that God must be either weak or heartless. Therefore, Ivan concludes, “I give Him back my entrance ticket” to this world.

Such are some of the tough issues which theology today must explore. It’s not a case of Presbyterian distinctives, such as the doctrine of predestination is supposed to be. In fact this strange idea has a history back to Paul and Augustine, and is part of Roman Catholic and Lutheran theology too. But Scottish theology in the 17th century gave it a dark twist which turned God into an arbitrary overlord and caused much harm. Maybe there’s something in the Scottish character (or climate!)—for instance, the hard doctrine of the great ninth century theologian John the Scot (Johannes Scotus Erigena,

and through that which is not holy? Of course there are signs and symbols of this presence—scripture, preaching and sacraments are foremost here. But elsewhere too, in human deeds of love and mercy, in peacemaking and protest against violence and discrimination, in those whose lives are dedicated to the fruits of the Spirit such as the virtues of faith, love and hope.

One column will discuss “God in the neighbour,” what used to be called seeing God’s image in every human being, including our enemies, even unbelievers—this was an important point for Calvin. Other articles will treat God in creation, in scripture, in prayer and so on. Some pressing contemporary issues must be examined—God in world religions needs further study in our age of religious pluralism. What about God’s presence in the workplace, so terribly secular in its bottom-line values? Or the arts, those media—music and film, television and related technologies both trivial and serious—so influential today, especially for our youth?

Again, why call ourselves “Presbyterian?” This describes our way of church government, our polity. But isn’t this a





# The Love Bomb

HANDLE AN OLD, FAMILIAR, FAVOURITE CHAPTER WITH CARE! **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

*Sunday, January 31*  
*Epiphany 4*  
*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

**W**hy does Paul pause in the middle of a really good argument about the use and abuse of spiritual gifts? He's making real headway. Anyone with any sense will be with him by the end of chapter 12, ready to move on to his powerful conclusion in chapter 14. Chapter 13 sticks out like a rhetorical sore thumb. Some scholars say the love bomb was dropped into the final version of 1 Corinthians to soften it up. Take the edge

off Paul's often subtly cutting words.

Chapter 13 fits the argument. It's not unusual for a skilled rhetorician like Paul to shift gears. He takes his appeal to another level. He has been driving for the head. Now he aims for the gut (what we call "heart"). The love bomb is an "encomium," a hymn of praise to a person or a virtue. In this case it's a virtue, though Paul begins by using his person as a negative example, without taking anything away from his authority or achievements.

Does Paul mean love is the greatest spiritual gift? No. That's clear in 14:1: "Pursue love and strive for the spiritual

gifts." Love isn't a gift that trumps tongues, healing or wisdom. Love is a virtue that arches over the quest for spiritual gifts, governs the application of them, and forms the attitude of the gifted. If your aim is to have more and more of this love in you, says Paul, you'll know why there are spiritual gifts. To serve others, not yourself. To build community, not make you powerful. To fulfill God's purposes, not yours.

Love then, and not who has which gifts, is supposed to be the governing principle of congregational life. This love isn't affection. It's not about having good feelings about others. It's not about acting in ways we ►



## Love, then, and not who has which [spiritual] gifts, is supposed to be the governing principle of congregational life

hope will make others love us, or do what we want. Not *philia*, arising from shared interest and duty. Not *storgé*, that binds parent and child and draws kin together. Not *eros*, either, with all the good and the dangerous that runs with passion. This is *agapé*, not without passion, but a burning drive for the good of others. *Agapé* is more an act of will than of feeling, but is never without feeling. *Agapé* isn't conditional on any prior human relationship: communal, familial, marital or romantic. *Agapé's* only standard is the love of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus sometimes speaks of *philia*, but John tells us Jesus commands *agapé*, after his example (John 13:34, 15:12,17). This love is a direc-

tion of the will. A direction of life.

This love is commanded, required of us. But beware of turning gospel into law. Sometimes we preach this chapter as a list of commandments. "You be kind, gentle, patient, willing to take second place ... and you'll love the way God wants you to love." We may not say it that way, but when we drop the love bomb it can sound like that. And people who know they haven't always been kind, gentle and all will feel like failures.

If we feel we have to extrapolate and expound on each phrase, we'll pound the life out of both the text and the congregation. We'll also miss Paul's purpose in dropping the love bomb into a very important argument

for his congregation, and an equally important message to ours.

We could read this text as we do at weddings. Reduce it to a list of nice words to be read when we're all feeling good and hopeful. Love-lite and without a splinter of the cross. More of a pop than an explosion.

Instead of a list of good qualities, read the chapter as 19 (or so) ways to say one thing. Nineteen ways to praise *agapé*. Nineteen ways to say choosing to live toward this Christ-like love is better than behaving like first-century Corinthians (or 21st century Presbyterians?). ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax.*

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# A New Song

WE NEED SOMETHING NEW TO TURN THE TIDE. **BY HARVEY SELF**

*O sing to the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.—Psalm 96:1*

As we venture into a new year, a famous photographic image comes to my mind. It is the image of the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces, General Dwight Eisenhower addressing the troops of the American 101st Airborne the day before D-Day. No one knows exactly what he had to say but you can be sure it was words that conveyed the urgency of the moment. The future of the war depended to a large extent on these troops accomplishing their tasks. It was a moment when clarity of mission was paramount. They were being called upon to do something new, something that had never been tried before in history, a combined air, sea and land assault on the continent of Europe.

The same was true of the Prophet Micah when God called upon him to set before the people of Israel an urgent sense of mission in a most critical moment in their history. The setting is this: the armies of Assyria have conquered the region of Israel in the north and the region of Judah in the south and stand now on the verge of conquering Jerusalem, the City of David. The very life and death of the nation hangs in the balance. What should they do? "What does the Lord require of us?" are the exact words of the Prophet Micah. Should we ramp up what we have been doing in the past in the realm of the sacrificial system at the Temple of

Solomon? Sacrifice more bulls, pour out even more oil, offer even our firstborn sons? Would this be enough to turn the tide in this moment of national collapse?

Or does the Lord require of His people and envision for His people something altogether new and different? Something which will no longer be tied to a kingdom of geopolitical boundaries and limitations, but instead be founded upon a kingdom with no limits either political, racial, religious or geographical? A kingdom built instead upon eternal and universal values and principles such as acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with your God?

An intriguing thought, perhaps even a captivating thought. The problem is that it is so radically new and different. It calls for a sweeping clean of the slate and a complete rethinking of mission and purpose. It calls for a sense of mission and purpose that includes all peoples under heaven, under one Creator and Lord. And yet in spite of its radical nature the Prophet Micah says, "This is the word of the Lord!" this is "What the Lord requires of you."

It calls to mind the mission and purpose of Eisenhower as he stood on the threshold of Operation Overlord, D-Day June 6, 1944. He had formulated a plan radically different than that drafted by his military predecessors in the First World War who thought only in terms of trench warfare. Eisenhower knew that approach had not worked and so he



envisioned something altogether new, and it turned the tide of the war.

What of us in the Presbyterian Church in Canada today, in what I believe is an equally momentous point in our life and history? Will we cling to what worked for the "Presbyterian Club" of a past generation? Or will we listen to the word of the Lord for a new day? Will we listen for the word of the Lord for all people and not just for the Presbyterian family? Will we listen for the word of the Lord about acting justly wherever there is injustice, loving mercy wherever the need of our neighbour is evident on the road of life and about walking humbly with our God, the God of not just 113,000 Presbyterians in Canada but of all peoples under heaven? I hope and pray that our answer will be in the spirit of the psalmist:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song in 2010!" O sing unto the Lord a new song forever! ■

*Blessings,*



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **Knox, Teeswater, Ont.**

One Sunday last July, almost 20 Bike For Bibles riders and their support team stopped at Knox, Teeswater, for worship and lunch, along their six-day, 700 kilometre fundraising tour. An initiative of the Canadian Bible Society, this year's tour is raising money to put Bibles into the hands of athletes and their support teams at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

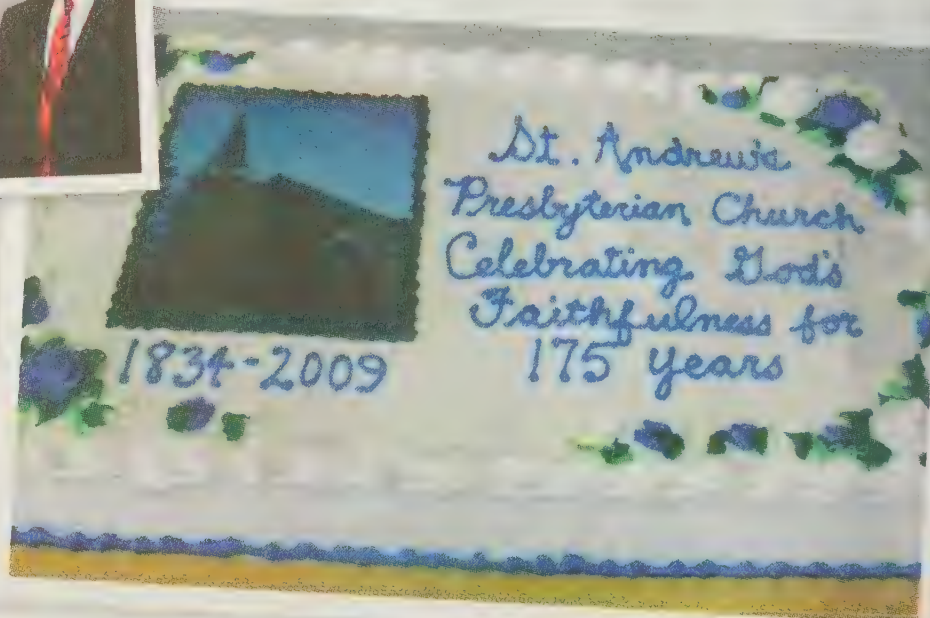


## **Gateway Community, Toronto, Ont.**

John Carey has faithfully guided the finances at Gateway Community, Toronto, for nearly 40 years; the last 25 as the treasurer, and previously helping out when needed. But his talents have served the church in a thousand other ways as well, including looking after the physical plant, putting up the massive annual Christmas tree and serving on a variety of commissions and committees. Though retiring as treasurer, he is still available in many other ways. He's seen with Rev. Paulette Brown.

## **St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont.**

St. Andrew's, Welland, includes 19 people who have been members for 50 years or more. Edythe Phillips has been at the church for 71 years. Founded by a Scottish minister in 1834, St. Andrew's rejected union in 1925 by a vote of 230-38, and has been growing strong and steady ever since. (As a consistent contributor to People and Places, we have been able to follow its activities for years.) Rev. Clyde Ervine, of Central, Hamilton, Ont., was the guest speaker at the 175th anniversary service in October. Also seen, Pastor Guy Sinclair.







### St. Stephen's, Creston, B.C.

Remembering the past: St. Stephen's, Creston, celebrated its centennial this year. This high tea was held in the spring. Time-appropriate dress and music made for a lovely celebration and an enjoyable afternoon. But this tea, open to the community, was also a fundraiser for a local safe home for women and children. Now that's the way to party.



### St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont.

The Sunday school children at St. Paul's, Simcoe, made jewellery and sold it at the annual church yard sale. Proceeds from the sale were presented to the Women's Missionary Society in September. The monies raised will be used by a school in Jobat, India. Deedie Campbell, representing the WMS, accepted the cheque from Aaron Melnyk and Lauren Fulton.



### Bridlewood, Toronto

Here comes the future: Jonathan Nip joined Bridlewood, Toronto, as their new full-time director of youth and family ministries. Joining him at the cake are Joanna Gorres and Shirley Charleson.

### online extra

**ALSO ON OUR WEBSITE:** Rev. Yeon Wha Kim was welcomed into the pastoral charge of First, Thunder Bay, Ont., in September.

**PLEASE VISIT THE MONTHLY PNP PAGE AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA) FOR MORE.**



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## Obituaries

**MACLEAN, MARY I.**, a longtime faithful elder and member of St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta., passed away peacefully on July 21, 2009 at the age of 91 years. Born of Scottish immigrant parents on the family farm near Monarch, Alta., Mary never married but loved and was loved by many friends and relatives.

During World War II she served in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a parachute packer in Pearce, High River and Edmonton, Alta. In 1958 she moved to Lethbridge where she worked in several pharmacies until her retirement. At St. Andrew's she was particularly devoted to the work of the Women's Missionary Society through the Ruby Walker group, her duties as an always-present elder for over 30 years, and was a key figure in the production of the church's centennial history book in 1975.

**MANTHORPE, REV. ROSS**, was born in the East End of London, July 16, 1921. He served in the Royal Air Force for six years. While training air crews in Nova Scotia, he met Agnes Brown whom he married in 1943. Ross landed in northern France on D-Day and later helped to liberate one of the Nazi concentration camps. For his valor, Ross was awarded several military medals.

After the war Ross received the Lord and was soon called to ministry. Ross studied for two years in Regina, Sask., where he exercised his spiritual gifts of evangelism and preaching by planting a church. Ross then began his studies at Knox College, Toronto (1963) and pastored a three-point charge, yet graduated with honours.

Ross was appointed to the mission charge of Coquitlam, B.C., where he built the church to a thriving congregation (1965-69) serving also as chaplain at Simon Fraser University. In 1969, Ross became the chaplain at the Oakalla Prison. His vibrant ministry reached the prisoners, their families and the corrections staff. Following retirement at 70 years of age, Ross became even more involved in ministry within local congregations. His passions were

preaching and prayer. In his late 70s he learned to sail, becoming a skilled and competent sailor.

Ross Manthorpe died on July 1, 2009

and is survived by Agnes, his wife of 66 years, Marthe (Ray), Troy (Rosalind) and Dahl (Lorelei) and six grandchildren. We have been blessed by his gifts. ■

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# Called to Wonder

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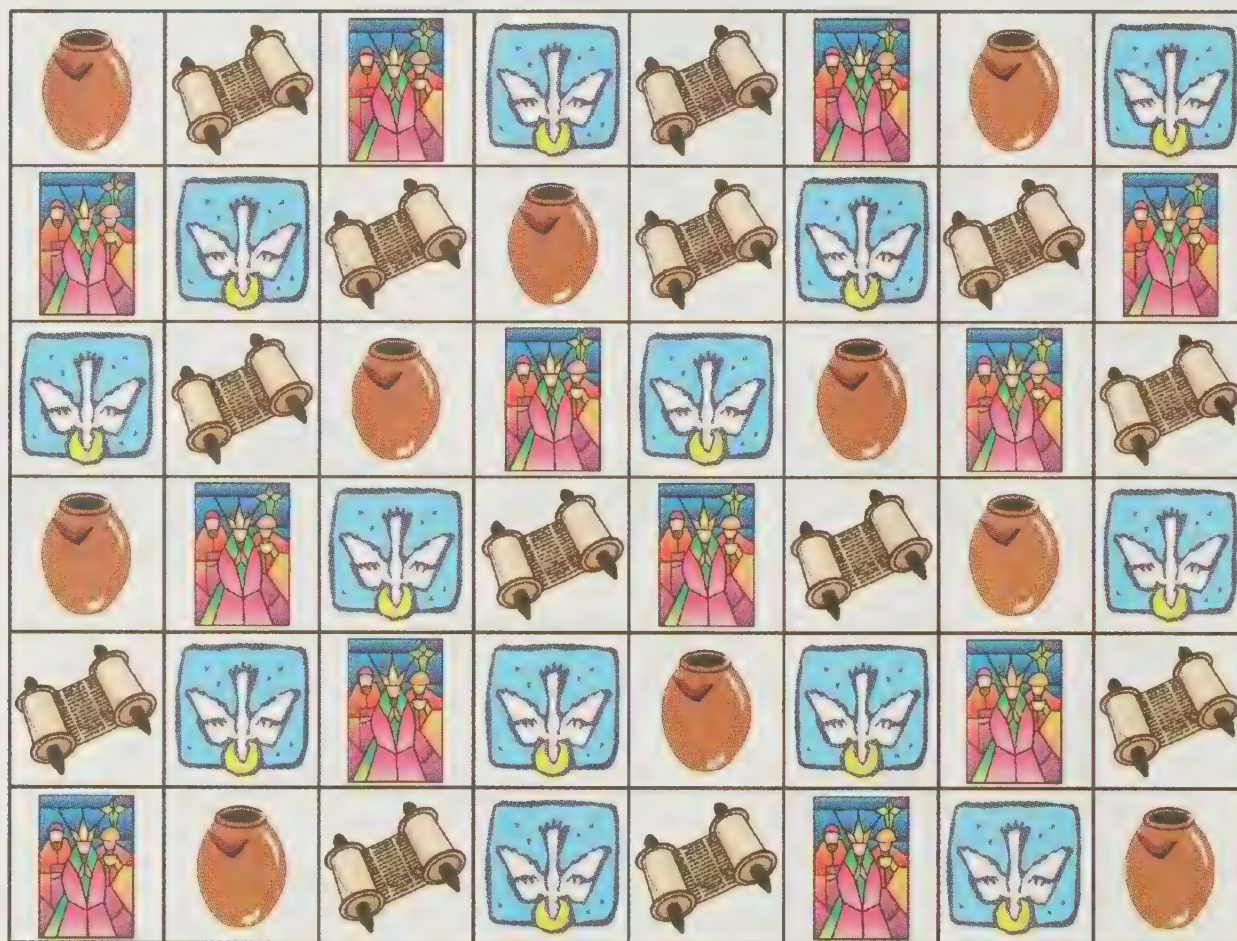
## LECTIONARY PICTURE PUZZLE

**Instructions:** Cross off all of the pictures of DESCENDING DOVES that are one square above the MAGI AND THEIR GIFTS, one square to the left of a WATER JUG, or directly between two HEBREW SCROLLS (either horizontally or vertically).

How many pictures of DESCENDING DOVES are left? \_\_\_\_\_

A **lectionary** is simply a list of Bible passages. Many Protestant churches now use the Revised Common Lectionary. It includes readings for Sunday worship services and for other special days, such as Christmas Eve and Good Friday.

These Bible readings are organized around the two major seasons of the church year, beginning with Advent-Christmas-Epiphany and then Lent-Easter-Pentecost. The rest of the year between Pentecost and Advent is called Ordinary Time, from the word *ordinal* which means counted time.



### Gospel Lectionary Readings for January 2010

January 3



Matthew 2:1-12

January 10



Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17



John 2:1-11

January 24



Luke 4:14-21

January 31



Luke 4: 21-30



*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

sticky June heat and passed through airport security in Vancouver.

But as it turned out, we wore every piece of wool we brought with us and some we purchased while there—much of it to bed. I can honestly say I have never been so chilled to the bone. Part of it was the New Zealand wind. Part of it was the New Zealand dampness, at least outside of central Otago. But most of it was home heating.

this is a native population that is very rugged and hardy and a visiting winter population that is often bordering on hypothermia. The one consolation is that every bed seems to have an electric heating pad. Approximately one hour before bedtime, one sprints through the icy hallway for one's bedroom, turns on the heating pad and then dashes back to the living room to rub the numbness out of one's feet until bedtime. Churches are

After returning from New Zealand, and upon reflection, it seems to me that Canada, from airport to church, is rapidly changing. Are we becoming frigid? Is our capacity for feeling and showing affection icing over? This particularly bothers me in the church. We church types can spend so much time and energy on polity, order, administration, buildings, programs, theology, worship style and the like,

## Like most Canucks we live in a very cold climate and compensate by seriously overheating our home. That's our Canadian winter tradition

Linda and I live in the cold Cariboo-Chilcotin in a fairly typical Canadian house. It has thick fiberglass insulation in the roof and walls, a fully heated basement and double glazed windows. We have central heating with vents in every room and a radiant wood heater in the living room that blazes away after the outside temperatures get down to anything lower than -20 C. Like most Canucks we live in a very cold climate and compensate by seriously overheating our home. That's our Canadian winter tradition.

In New Zealand we discovered a whole other winter tradition. I expect, partly because it never gets so cold that everything inside a home could freeze in a split second, and partly because most of the population can trace its roots back to the British Isles where cold stone houses heated with smoldering peat fires were the norm, many New Zealanders have homes with little or no central heating. Often their dwellings lack insulation in floor, wall or attic. Most folks have single glazed windows and a small space heater, either electric or coal, for heat. It is fairly typical to shut off the bedrooms, bathrooms and all other rooms from the one room in the house that is heated, and that one room doesn't seem to get the tiny space heater turned on until after there are ample bodies standing around it trying to warm themselves. The net result of

heated in the same Spartan way. People huddle around space heaters suspended from the walls or the ceilings instead of glomming onto the back pew like in Canada. One rural church, I think it was at Stirling, had solved the problem of people huddling around heaters by wiring 220-volt heating grills into the seats of all the pews. (I think this may be a New Zealand version of the "comfortable pew.")

We learned one thing for sure in New Zealand; cold is a relative thing. Such limited heating in home, church and hotel left Linda and I feeling like our core body temperatures were on a slow downward spiral. After two weeks in New Zealand in winter we were seriously chilled; but oh, the warmth of the New Zealand people. Never before in our lives were we so far away from home and never before in our lives were we so warmly welcomed. This was true amongst people generally, but in the church it was as if we were cherished family. The welcome, hospitality and genuine affection freely expressed by the people totally stole our hearts and warmed our souls. We were swept off our feet with love, and taken somewhat off guard. We still are not sure how to adequately respond. Words, at least mine, cannot do justice to the people's genuine heartfelt warmth and love that we experienced in the many Christian communities we visited.

that we totally lose the essence of what it means to be church, what it means to be children of God and siblings of Jesus, brothers and sisters, one in love and in Christ. And if our anal attitudes towards all this institutional stuff can contribute to chilling our love and outward affection towards each other, what about our fear of things like H1N1, which seems to have rendered a simple handshake obsolete? And the tyranny of our responses to a sexually charged society that seems to have rendered physical displays of affection as suspicious, and a hug from a child as possibly deviant? What's happening to us in Canada, Christians, brothers and sisters? Where is all this relative coldness coming from? In the face of all this I read my Bible and discover my Lord freely reaching out and touching lepers. In the face of all this I read my Bible and it has the audacity to instruct the people of Christ's church, not once but numerous times: "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26) ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*





# Relative Cold

ARE WE BECOMING FRIGID IN CANADA? BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**“B**last! It’s cold,” I said, my teeth chattering and chewing the words.

“You can say that again,” Linda said. “I have been getting increasingly chilled for the past week. It’s like my core body temperature is in a permanent nosedive.”

“Hypothermia is definitely setting in,” I said as I pulled wool socks up over the top of my long johns and dove under the covers. “Ian said to help ourselves to a shower in the morning but I can’t imagine surviving the experience.”

“He also said the pipes in the attic might be frozen so to wait until he got up and jimmied a thingamajig that would somehow get them flowing again,” Linda chattered. “I think I will pass on the shower too. Thank God for the thermostatically controlled beds.”

It’s January 2010. I thawed out the above conversation just for this article. It’s been preserved, frozen and unheard, since it was spoken nearly a half year ago. So how on earth could we have been so cold in June?

New Zealand, that’s how. Before making our dive Down Under, I did some research. I found that for much of the

country winter temperatures only occasionally dip below zero. I found that snow, on the occasions when it comes, seldom stays for more than a few days at a time. Winter in much of New Zealand seemed to me, on paper at least, to be sort of like a mild winter in Lotus Land or perhaps Vancouver, hardly a winter at all. But Bruce Fraser, mission advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland of New Zealand’s Presbyterian Church put up a red flag. Bruce was arranging our trip. He had visited us in the Cariboo-Chilcotin in the midst of a nasty Arctic front in early December 2007 that had delivered a couple of feet of snow and –20 C temperatures. By experience he knew a little about our Canadian winters. But Bruce sternly warned us that New Zealand winters were not a thing to trifle with. His warning was punctuated with “bring lots of layers of clothes when you come.”

And so Linda and I bought new luggage and crammed it full of wool shirts, sweaters, socks, long underwear, gloves and tuques. Ironically, we were visiting the capital of wool and seemed to be taking every wool garment we owned. We even crammed in winter parkas. We felt more than a little foolish as we traipsed out of the

continued on page 49





### January's Most Beautiful Church: ST. PAUL'S, SIMCOE, ONT.

I believe St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Simcoe, Ont., is the most beautiful church you would ever want to attend. Its exterior is a picturesque, beautiful sight. The interior also excels in beauty each and every Sunday from the faces of the people who grace the sanctuary.

You are always greeted with a smile and handshake by our weekly greeters. The ushers are there as well to assist with your needs. We, at St. Paul's are a family.

St. Paul's has a membership of close to 300. A new addition was added a few years ago with a price tag of just over \$821,000. It was paid off a year earlier than predicted. That shows dedication.

The congregation consists of various ages. We have dedicated Sunday school teachers, and loving people tend to the babies and toddlers in our nursery. There are also a number of church groups and committees.

New leaders joined us last year—Rev. Ian Shaw and his wife, Linda. We are blessed to have them lead us in the work of the Lord.

If you get an opportunity to visit Simcoe, please take a moment and visit with us. You'll be warmly welcomed and I'm sure you will agree that St. Paul's is a beautiful church.

LEIGHTON A. PEACH, MEMBER, ST. PAUL'S, SIMCOE, ONTARIO



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by Patricia Schneider



*"Although I have travelled  
many places, this particular  
journey is the strangest*

*I have ever made.*

*I have discovered that  
in losing a husband,  
I have lost who I am.*

*Who was I before I took  
on all the roles of wife,  
mother, grandmother?*

*Once upon a time,  
there was a "me" ...  
a girl whose only roles  
were daughter  
and sister."*

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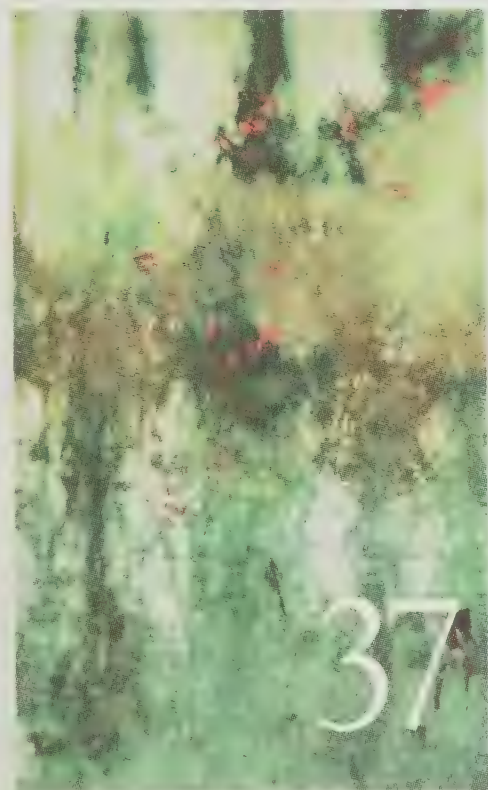
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# The Hold Fire

SING IN THE DAY, SING IN THE NIGHT. BY DAVID HARRIS

Blame it on Aristotle. If you happen to miss church on Feb. 28 because you are watching the men's gold medal hockey game, that is. On the other hand, you might want to make sure you are in church to pray for our side!

But if you aren't, you can always point out that Aristotle said music at the Olympics is divinely inspiring.

Seriously. I quote from *The Politics*: "Music at the Olympic games ... fills the soul with enthusiasm." In the Greek of Aristotle's time, enthusiasm, from the words *en* (in) and *theos* (God), means "possessed by God" or "inspired."

That said, with all due respect to David Foster's rousing theme for the 1988 Calgary Games, I've never been much moved by Olympic songs.

Perhaps Ari was thinking more along the lines of the hymns Welsh rugby fans sing.

It's true. A French rugby player once said how utterly demoralizing it was for opponents when the Welsh fans would begin singing, because it would fire up the Welsh side so.

Hymns can do that. Some years ago I attended a Cymanfa Ganu, several thousand people singing Welsh hymns. It made your hair stand on end and brought more than one lump to the throat. I think it was the 2,000 or so tenors—farmers, miners, doctors and lawyers—who know all the parts to all the great hymns by memory.

The three tenors? Ha! They're squeaking mice by comparison.

This is obviously a long segue into our cover package this month on the role of music in religious worship. And in Wales, rugby is as much a religion as Habs hockey is in Montreal.

But I digress. Some of our authors this month mention their favourite



hymns, so I thought I'd share a few of mine.

In return, perhaps you will post comments on them on our website and add your own favourites. We'd love to hear what really stirs your soul.

While you're at it, take a look at Andrew Donaldson's In Song blog: [presbyterianrecord.com/articles/insong](http://presbyterianrecord.com/articles/insong).

I'm going to stick with the Welsh connection for my first hymn tune. It's *Blaenwern*, and appears with two sets of lyrics in the *Book of Praise*. I love this tune partly because it is so simply constructed and yet has such an emotional build. If you attend a Welsh hymn sing, you may hear the latter half of the tune repeated once or twice after the last verse, just like some great pop tunes.

My second pick is also a tune found in the *Book of Praise*, but the words aren't. Charles Wesley's *O Thou Who Camest From Above* is all about inspiration. It is set to the lovely tune *Hereford*, written by Charles's grandson, Samuel Sebastian Wesley.

Here's verse three: "Jesus, confirm my heart's desire to work and speak and think for thee; still let me guard the hold fire, and still stir up thy gift in me."

I'm also quite fond of tunes written or arranged by the contemporary English composer Noël Tredinnick. His

crushed, jazz-influenced harmonies are gorgeous.

*Majestas* is a tune written by Michael Baughen arranged by Tredinnick. The words, *Name of All Majesty*, were written by Timothy Dudley-Smith.

Singing this hymn reminds me of Graham Sutherland's extraordinary Christ the King tapestry in Coventry Cathedral. The last verse:

*Source of all sovereignty,  
light, immortality,  
life everlasting  
and heaven assured;  
so with the ransomed,  
we praise him eternally,  
Christ in his majesty –  
Jesus is Lord!*

Although this particular hymn is in *Hymns for Today's Church*, Baughen, Tredinnick and Dudley-Smith all have tunes and words in the *Book of Praise*.

My final two are the beautiful words *Come Down, O Love Divine*, set to equally transporting music by Ralph Vaughan Williams and *Siyahamba* (*We are Marching in the Light of God*), a South African Xhosa hymn translated and set to music by the Swedish South African, Anders Nyberg. Both hymns are in the *Book of Praise*.

The point of singing hymns, of course, is to help us draw nearer in spirit to God. Which may be why the Welsh have another hymn that asks God for a pure heart in order to "Sing in the day, sing in the night." ■

David Harris



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## Let's Mobilize

*Re CIDA Abandons Kairos, January News*

It saddens me that all the work that went into community and consensus building in many areas—Kelowna Accord, rights of the indigenous peoples, and now Kairos—can all be dismissed not by discussion, conversation and debate by citizens and our elected representatives but simply by a few people at the Prime Minister's Office. It saddens me that our government is dividing our nation into "us" and "them." What is very troubling to me is that so many citizens either do not realize how destructive this approach is, or they just don't care. We are losing the value of respect, compassion and caring. Since not all Presbyterians subscribe to the *Record*, is there a chance that an article such as this could be sent to all congregations to include with the bulletin on Sunday? Too many people are unaware. Let's mobilize people and get them to encourage their elected MPs, regardless of party affiliation, to speak out against the continual silencing of all those voices that have something to contribute and that need to be heard.

TONY BOONSTRA, ON RECORD WEBSITE

*Re Restore Kairos' Funding,  
For the Record, January*

I wish to express my appreciation to David Harris for his clearly articulated comments concerning the federal government's decision to discontinue support to Kairos through CIDA after 35 years. The circumstances surrounding the cut (unannounced, unexplained, last minute, contrary to ongoing communications from CIDA staff) certainly suggest the action was for political reasons. The suggestion that Kairos and its denominational members are anti-Semitic is ridiculous and shameful. It is reminiscent of the suggestion that criticizing the actions of the federal government and its top

# Letters



policy and military leaders regarding the torture of prisoners by Afghani forces after capture by Canadian forces is "un-Canadian" and hurtful to Canadian soldiers who risk their lives every day. Again, this is ridiculous.

I would suggest punishing those who speak out is contrary to Canadian values. Eliminating debate and silencing the House of Commons for inappropriate reasons are also contrary to Canadian values. One wonders if Kairos is not being "punished" for conducting the May 2009 Leaders' Tour (which included the Presbyterian Church in Canada's then-Moderator Rev. Cheol Soon Park) to the Alberta tar sands. The clash between prophetic voices and political leaders is well documented in the Bible; the challenge to God's people remains the same.

JOAN MASTERTON, TORONTO

## Only One Way to Salvation

*Re The Universal Word,  
Theology 101, December*

I agree that for the word of God, there are no outsiders—we are, after all, all children of God. And all of ➤

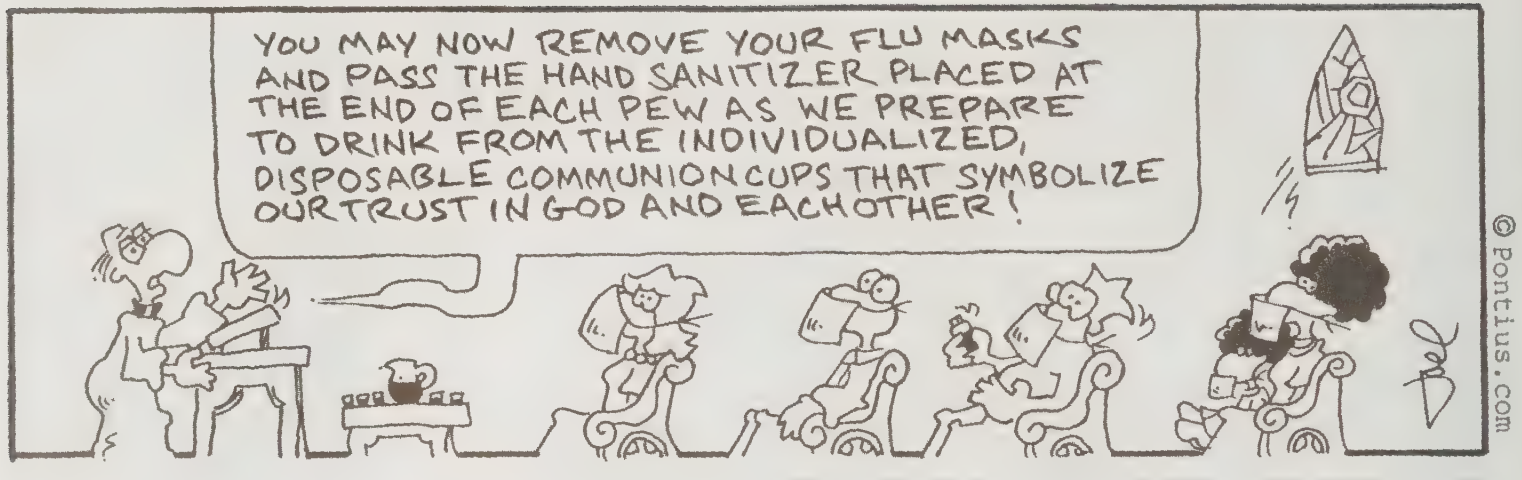
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## Pontius' Puddle



humankind has been created in the image of God. And it is God's will that everyone be saved. But God has chosen to give us the gift of free will. Thus, we can choose to be separated from God; we can choose our own destiny even though He still sees us as His children.

I believe the Bible shows us how we are to live, how we are to make choices, and how we can be saved. I don't believe that arrogance, prejudice and feelings of superiority are Christian feelings—here we see our human

shortcomings, our sins as Christians. We are called to serve, called to humility, called to treat all others as Jesus treated the marginalized people of his time. Jesus gave us the great commission so that his plans for all of humankind can become reality. We need to enter into dialogue with others in love and humility, not with feelings of superiority. We are to love others by following the example of Jesus, who kissed the leper clean. Then others will understand that this is the only way to salvation, that the Good News is for everyone, that Christianity got many things wrong in its history, but that Christ didn't get it wrong at all.

Also, we need to obey the will of God as revealed in the Bible without understanding everything, for God's ways are not our ways. It is not for us to understand whether others will go to heaven or not, but we are to do the will of God as it is revealed to us through the word. The rest needs to be left up to God.

NICOLE REID, DUNNVILLE, ONT.

### A Unison "We"

*Re Zander Dunn, December Letters*

I want to thank Zander Dunn for his honesty about how he arrives at his theology, taking from the Bible that which is most helpful to him. But that, really, is the issue. We may all do that

to some extent, but is that what we're supposed to do? Are we to judge the truth or is the truth to judge us? Do we find our own way to God or does God show us the way?

In order to hold the opinion Zander holds about universalism, he needs to do away with (or at least ignore) large portions of scripture, just as Marcion tried to do centuries ago. Zander contends that the portions of scripture that support universalism are more Christ-like than those which don't. But to which Jesus is he actually comparing them? The one who spoke about wheat and tares, sheep and goats? In order to suggest that universalism is more Christ-like, Zander then has to radically remake Jesus. In whose image is he then going to remake him? And where does the remaking end?

Zander also misses my point when he suggests that the Apostles' Creed's use of the words "I believe ..." gives us permission to follow them with whatever words we like. It is the very fact that the whole church follows "I believe ..." with the same words that defines the church, that defines our faith as Christian faith, and turns that chorus of "I's" into a unison "we."

DUNCAN CAMERON, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

With interest, I recently read the debate generated by Zander Dunn's response

"Popping The Question," May 2009 issue





to Calvin Brown's article Popping the Question (May, 2009). Duncan Cameron (Letters, Nov. 2009) seems to be saying what a Catholic friend of mine professes: that one must accept doctrine absolutely and without question; that ordinances hammered out centuries ago (by men pursuing political as well as theological power) have to be believed wholesale for faith to be true. He criticizes Dunn for beginning two paragraphs with "I," asserting that the church exists "not as a collection of people who say 'I believe,' but as a community of faith that says 'we believe.'" Just this past Sunday I stood with 300 or so fellow Presbyterians who in unison recited the Apostles' Creed, beginning: "I believe."

Personally, I believe Christ's saving grace transcends the clumsy attempts of men to define and package it, whatever creed they choose to follow.

BLAIR WILLIAMS, TORONTO

### **Appreciation for National Staff**

*Re Churches Share Less with National Offices, December News*

I am saddened and concerned that our staff at national offices will have one week of unpaid leave in 2010 and 2011 and will receive no cost of living allowances during these years.

I am grateful for the work the staff do. Whenever I have sought help or guidance, I (and the congregation I

am with) have been well served. In the loss of one week, we lose their valuable services. If we choose to cut the number of staff in our church offices, there will be a loss.

My concern comes when I imagine walking a mile in our national staff's shoes. Our church has placed a stressful burden upon them. We have not asked this of other professional workers in our denomination. I feel uncomfortable as a minister who will not face the same consequences.

I recognize the Assembly Council's decision may be the best choice among the available options. Nevertheless, it needs to be a wake-up call. We need to support our staff well through Presbyterians Sharing. We need to plan to make sure there is equity in the sacrifices we make when difficult economic times come.

So, I want to share a message with our national staff. Your work is of great value. Our church is stronger because of your faithfulness.

REV. MARK GEDCKE, KITCHENER, ONT.

### **Praise for Online Columnists**

*Re Patricia Schneider's Online Column*

I love this writer!

LINDA BOMBAK, EDMONTON

*Re Making a CD, In Song, November 15*

Thank you for writing on this important, and sometimes overlooked, ➤

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**Personal Necessities:** Shampoo and conditioner, disposable razors, deodorant, sunscreen, feminine products, lip balms, toothpaste and toothbrushes, individual packages of tissues, hairbrushes and combs.

**Food and Kitchen Items:** Powdered juice, powdered milk, juice boxes, fresh fruit and vegetables, packaged or frozen foods (especially meat, vegetables, fruit and juice) cheese (grated or block), eggs, soup, pasta, rice, baking supplies, breakfast cereals, sugar pepper, salt, spices, frozen casseroles, tea bags, peanut butter, pasta sauce and coffee; flatware or silverware.

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## FRONT Letters



"A Blood-Red Moon" by David Webber, November 2009 issue

topic. If anyone should be paying attention to this issue it should be Christians!

EVANGELINE KEELEY, ON RECORD WEBSITE

as David Webber, Calvin Brown, John Vissers and others.

REV. DOUG SWANSON, SALMON ARM, B.C.

### Concerned About the Record

It concerns me deeply that a significant number of the members of my congregation are discontinuing their subscriptions to the *Record*. Many are rightly concerned with what passes for theology in the pages of a magazine that most of us believe ought to be upholding the Reformed teachings and standards of our denomination.

Dr. McLelland's theological/philosophical discourses which appear to place the Christian faith as one of many belief systems that orbit inside some overarching sphere of greater truth, is disconcerting, to say the least. Zander Dunn's universalism, given that he is an ordained minister within the PCC, is also troubling.

I may be wrong, but the *Record* appears to be endorsing and even promoting positions on human sexuality that are incongruent with our denomination's statements regarding the same.

These are just several of the ways we perceive our denominational publication to be straying from God's truth and from credible Christian witness in the world. I will continue to read the *Record* in hopes of better things, and in appreciation of contributors such

### Note from the Letters Editor

The letters this month (as they do each month) really enforce the idea expressed by Revs. Ray and Joyce Hodgson (January 2010) of the Presbyterian Church being a broad centre road. This is the magazine's monthly challenge: to give space to all the voices within the church and to encourage healthy and faithful conversation between these voices. There is much to discuss and the conversation spills past the finite limitations of these pages to the infinite space on our website, where you will find more letters and mini-forums at the end of each article. ■

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# Personal Missions

CARING AND GIVING. BY ANDREW FAIZ



**T**he largest portion of my annual givings goes to my congregational church; as does a large portion of my volunteer time. But competing for my time and chequebook are many other issues about which I care deeply. I regularly check my internal moral and ethical sextant to see if I'm putting my energies into areas which are meaningful to me and to my family.

My daughter's oldest friend (they were in the baby room together around their first birthdays) has cystic fibrosis. This little girl deserves a long long life filled with high highs and low lows like the rest of us. So, every spring our little family spends some time, effort and money to raise funds for the annual CF Walk for a Cure. It's our personal mission—which ends with a day at the Toronto Zoo and has become a highlight on our calendar.

Over the course of each year friends, colleagues, acquaintances and others appeal to us with their personal missions—usually for various diseases, medical conditions or local initiatives. This extends our circle of care to worthy areas—from literacy programs to various diseases and conditions to community environmental initiatives, like native plants on private yards and community gardens on corporate grounds.

One of my many lives is in the arts. I have many very talented friends who are actors, writers, directors. I love to support them any way I can. I don't have the time to work on their productions—to lift a boom even for an afternoon—so I do what I can. Supporting the arts beyond those created by my friends is also important to me.

Then there's our daughter's public school. A small stack of twenties is

handed over at various booths at the annual Fall Fête. Plus the other regular asks: magazine drive, monthly book catalogues, craft and bake sales, etc., all in aid of a discretionary fund. It is part of the culture of schools these days. At the other end, having graduated from schools of higher and higher learning, we the parents are appealed to as good alumni.

I'm guessing that this list of givings and interests is not that different from yours—replace arts with Scouting, replace CF Walk with food bank. That while the bulk of your givings goes to your church, you feel pulled in many directions by your concerns, your legacies and your own personal missions.

Each of us is constantly discerning how to make the world a better place. We have some time, a few talents and a couple of dollars—gifts from God we want to return to creation somehow. It might include \$25 to the *Record* and 100 hours a year to Big Brothers and your time on session and your Sunday givings and helping with the clothing drive for the local women's shelter and an Out of the Cold program and sitting on the board of a local agency and signing an online petition like the Charter for Compassion and the time you spent reading up on Hopenhagan and \$50 to PWS&D and so on.

Once upon a time, many decades ago, our lump-sum payments to the government and to the church would cover the majority of concerns in the world, from international relief to local medical centres (both these examples: first initiated by churches then ceded to governments). But, either the church has shrunk, or the world has grown or, as I think more likely, our consciousness has grown to embrace more and more marginal corners of the world. Most of us increasingly do church outside of church.

EACH OF US IS  
CONSTANTLY  
DISCERNING  
HOW TO MAKE  
THE WORLD A  
BETTER PLACE

That doesn't mean we don't want to do church; in fact, I'd guess we want to do church more than ever. We find some meaningful ways of doing church outside the parameters of Sunday morning.

We go to church not out of habit or because of societal pressures (which bend in the opposite direction) but because we want to be there. It is a testament to our faith. And we put our money and our time and our talents where our faith is; but, not all of them, because, and here's the dirty little secret, "church" is not as big as our faith. And you can see in the myriad ways we serve, that we wish it were. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



## Churches Fuming Over Anti-Semitism Claim

Government shares new reason for dropping Kairos. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A CLAIM BY CANADA'S MINISTER OF immigration that a Presbyterian-supported social justice group is anti-Semitic has church members denouncing the government as irresponsible and "draconian."

"We don't usually get treated like this," said Rev. Harvey Self, Moderator of the 135th General Assembly. "There's been a total lack of accountability by the government. It should at least have the guts to say what it really means. The comments are totally baffling."

"We're not a third-world dictatorship, but it feels more and more like that."

Kairos, which represents 11 Canadian churches including the PCC, was refused funding by the Canadian International Development Agency last November. No explanation was given by Bev Oda, minister of international cooperation, other than to say Kairos no longer fit with the government's priorities. The decision caused its share of backlash.

In December, Minister of Immigration Jason Kenney threw fuel onto the fire when he referred to his government's "zero-tolerance policy to anti-Semitism," saying it had "defunded organizations ... like Kairos for taking a leadership role in the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign" against Israel. The statement was part of a speech he made at the Global Forum to Counter Anti-Semitism in Jerusalem.

According to a Kairos press release, the statement is false: "Two points need to be made: criticism of Israel does not constitute anti-Semitism; and CIDA was developed to fund international

aid and not to serve political agendas."

In 2007 Kairos' board of directors (on which the PCC has two representatives) decided against advocating for any type of boycott or economic sanctions against Israel. A document stating this was released in 2008 and endorsed by the Presbyterian Church's General

**"[The Canadian government] should at least have the guts to say what it really means. The comments are totally baffling"**

Assembly later that year. Kairos' policy is consistent with the government's which affirms Israel's right to live in peace, and supports the creation of a Palestinian state.

The confusion may lie in a recent document from Kairos Palestine that calls on "individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation." Kairos Canada's website stresses that it is not their document. *Kairos* is a Greek word meaning "God's time" and is often used by Christian groups.

"I lament the fact that the Canadian government did not do its homework before taking such a draconian action affecting genuine efforts which were encouraging dialogue and bringing help where it is so desperately needed," said Rev. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency.

"If the decision by Minister Bev Oda is at all related to the speech given by Jason Kenney, and gives any indication of how Stephen Harper's government is making decisions about the roles of

civil society within Canada and overseas, that would lead one to despair."

Fee was in Bethlehem and Jerusalem in December, and met with some Kairos partners. "I have seen the work of those organizations in Israel-Palestine," said Fee. "I believe Kairos is portraying Canadian and Christian values and was encouraging initiatives that were life affirming and were not partisan in any way."

Some of Kairos' member churches have said that by calling Kairos anti-Semitic, the government is labelling its 11 member churches as such.

"That's how I take it," said Self. "I don't see how you can separate the two."

Kairos has received support from numerous other organizations as well as all of Canada's opposition parties. Retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote:

"The initiatives of the Canadian churches through Kairos have inspired continued faithful ecumenical action ... to uphold human rights. The world needs more of Kairos Canada. It would be an unparalleled setback for the poor, vulnerable and disenfranchised if the voice and work of Kairos ... is muted."

Though the PCC has not made a formal statement, the Justice Ministries department is encouraging Presbyterians to write to their MPs, or to meet with them about the decision not to fund Kairos' 2009-2013 programs. Katherine Masterton, Justice Ministries' program coordinator, said so far representatives from 18 presbyteries have written to their MPs.

Email Katherine Masterton at [kmasterton@presbyterian.ca](mailto:kmasterton@presbyterian.ca) for more information. ■



# Bells Ring Out for Climate Change

Churches give warning. BY CONNIE PURVIS

THOUSANDS of bells in churches around the world rang out 350 times on Dec. 13, 2009 to call for action on climate change.

December 13 marked the height of UN negotiations at the climate change conference in Copenhagen, and corresponded with an ecumenical service at the Church of Our Lady, a Lutheran cathedral in the Danish capital.

"The pealing of bells has always served a dual purpose—to ring out with beauty but also with warning," said Rev. Dr. Andrew Johnston, minister at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, one of the participating churches. "This is an issue that

the whole world community needs to work on together."

According to the World Council of Churches, bells rang 350 times to represent 350 parts per million, the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide emissions according to many experts. Carbon dioxide levels currently hover around 390 ppm.

The WCC expressed disappointment in the wake of the Copenhagen summit, lamenting a lack of transparency during the negotiations leading up to the Copenhagen Accord, and suggested the agreement would do too little to stem



carbon dioxide emissions.

In a news release, the group called on industrialized countries to create "clear reduction targets" aimed at reducing emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, and an annual US\$150 billion to help vulnerable developing countries as they try to adapt. ■

## Solar Panels Installed at Ontario Church

An old church takes an environmentally-friendly turn. BY CONNIE PURVIS

AFTER a five-month delay, St. Andrew's in Owen Sound, Ont., is on its way to becoming the "greenest" Presbyterian church in the country thanks to 32 solar panels on the church roof that began generating electricity on Dec. 14, 2009.

The panels were installed in June and were expected to be active by July, but layers of red tape delayed the process.

Under a 20-year agreement with the Ontario Power Authority, the solar-generated electricity will be fed into the provincial grid. The church will continue to purchase its electricity at the going rate of eight cents per kilowatt hour, but will be paid 80 cents—10 times that amount—for each kilowatt hour its solar panels produce. With an estimated 8,000 kWh generated each year, the panels should provide about \$6,400 yearly, covering more than 80 per cent of the electricity costs incurred by the building.



Rev. Scott Sinclair and Dick Hibma show off a set of solar panels on the church roof.

The three-year project cost about \$54,000 and was among a series of initiatives aimed at reducing energy consumption at the 82-year-old church. An additional \$65,000 has been earmarked for upgrades including better insulation and fluorescent lighting.

The projects are funded by three

undesignated bequests totaling almost a million dollars left to the church by members of the congregation.

Once the process is complete, the church plans to share the steps it has taken toward sustainability in hopes that other groups can undertake similar initiatives in their own buildings. ■

Spotlight



# Three Reverend Doctors Nominated for Moderator

Teacher, minister, and associate secretary on 2010 ballot. BY CONNIE PURVIS

A TRIO of American-born, PhD-toting candidates are in the running for moderator of the 2010 General Assembly. Ballots were sent to presbyteries in December and votes will be tallied on April 1. The new moderator will be installed at assembly, which begins June 6 in Sydney, N.S.

**Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls** is dean of students and professor of Hebrew Bible at the Vancouver School of Theology and the author of three books. She was born in New Jersey and ordained by the PC(USA), but joined the Canadian church in 1995 to become a professor at Knox College, Toronto, where she taught for nine years. She is convener of the Hummingbird Ministries Council with the Presbytery of Westminster, and has a CV peppered with committees and academic papers, lectures and Bible studies that have taken her coast to coast.

"Teaching is really part of who I am," she said, noting that it paired well with her passion for the Bible. "Calvin had a good term for it: being a 'doctor of the church.' It sounds a little highfalutin' but that's what I've felt my vocation

is. I understand teaching both in the context of a theological college and also the church at large."

She says it is that kind of passion and experience she hopes to carry with her should the church chose her to be moderator. "Maybe I'll suggest to churches, in addition to an anniversary sermon, we start out with a Bible study," she said with a laugh.

**Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent** is a California native who has ministered in congregations across the country, from St. John's—where he serves at St. David's—to Armstrong, B.C. He has been clerk in Kootenay, Kamloops and Newfoundland presbyteries, and served six-year terms on the church doctrine committee and Assembly Council. In his undergraduate days, Dent studied linguistics and religion as he considered three future careers: Bible translation, teaching and his chosen vocation, pastoral ministry.

"In terms of the national church, my passion is for seeing the church come back to focus on vitality and ministry and the planting of churches," he said. "We need to listen to God and refocus

our energies as we listen together and help each other hear what God is saying. We need to be looking at other denominations and what they're doing. We have a lot to learn from the full spectrum of Christian expression across the board: conservative, liberal, evangelical, charismatic, everyone."

**Rev. Dr. Herb Gale** hails from North Carolina, but headed north to complete his education at the Toronto School of Theology. He ministered for several years in Stouffville and then in Guelph, Ont., alongside his wife, Rev. Dr. Shirley Gale, until she was forced to resign for health reasons. In 2004, he became associate secretary of Planned Giving, a role that he sees as an extension of his call to strengthen local congregations. He has served on the national worship committee, stewardship advisory committee and planning teams for Stewards by Design conferences since their inception in 1999.

"I'm interested in the next generation, in children and young people, and would like to see a clearer strategy for how to reach that group," he said. "My master of theology degree was in the area of spirituality, so helping to forge a living faith would be important for me."

He suggested he would also try to restore hope to congregations and presbyteries that have fallen into a "survival mindset."

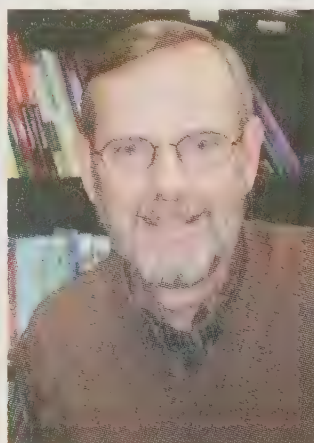
"Many congregations have given up dreaming because they don't see a future for themselves," he said. "But I think planned giving can really put wheels under those dreams. It provides a new source of money to do some creative things." ■



Patricia Dutcher-Walls



Jonathan Dent



Herb Gale



# Community News Briefs

## Presbyterian Youth Head to Gaza on Christmas Day

Two familiar youth, Hannah Carter, 27, and Laura Ashfield, 23, left for Cairo on Christmas Day to join a march demanding that Israel open its borders to the people of Gaza.

The duo attended at the request of the Canadian Friends of Sabeel and did not represent the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The Gaza Freedom March was organized by an international coalition formed after Israel's 22-week conflict in Gaza in 2008 and 2009. About 1,300 international walkers from 40 countries planned to enter Gaza through Egypt, join local residents, then meet an Israeli-led solidarity march at the Erez border crossing, Gaza's main entry and exit point for journalists, diplomats and aid workers. The march was intended to mark

the one-year anniversary of the Gaza attacks, which left about 1,400 Palestinians and over a dozen Israelis dead.

Egyptian officials barred the group from meeting together in Cairo and entering Gaza, citing security concerns. According to *Al Jazeera*, only 92 delegates eventually crossed the borders. The remainder protested in Cairo on Dec. 31 before disbanding on Jan. 2.

Carter and Ashfield, as representatives of the Canadian Friends of Sabeel, were among those who signed their names to the "Cairo Declaration," a controversial public statement crafted by the activists, which equates Israel with South Africa during apartheid and backs a United Palestinian call for a boycott and sanctions against Israel.



Activists at the Gaza Freedom March.

The two young women have participated in the International Youth Conference at the Sabeel Centre, Jerusalem, with sponsorship by the Presbyterian Church's Youth In Mission program. Ashfield was one of four Sabeel delegates who entered Gaza two years ago to worship with a local church.

The duo provided their own funds for the recent trip. At press time, both were in Jerusalem meeting with Sabeel's partner churches. They planned to travel to the West Bank.

Carter is a professional photographer and founder of From Palestine With Love, a movement that seeks to educate Canadians about the situation in Israel and Palestine through firsthand accounts and photography.

Ashfield is a PCC-sponsored intern at Project Ploughshares, an ecumenical agency that develops policies for nuclear disarmament and peace.

About 1.5 million people live in Gaza, which has been blockaded by Israel and Egypt since Hamas took power in the region in 2007. —C.Purvis

## Churches and Chaplains Reach Out During Vancouver Olympics

Like many churches in Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian rolled out the red carpet this month as the city hosts the 2010 Winter Olympic games.

The congregation will be broadcasting three or four sporting events on their sanctuary's big screen as part of a larger outreach strategy developed by pastors in the church's Oakridge neighbourhood, including the Anglican, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist and United churches.

In addition to athletes and sports fans, more than 6,000 police officers have been assigned to the games, and Rev. Dr. Chuck Congram will be one of 13 chaplains offering spiritual support for the RCMP.

"It's critical to provide this kind of service because we have thousands of police officers away from home for an extended period," said the retired Presbyterian minister, who has worked as a police chaplain for over 20 years. "They're also under incredible pressure because of the varied circumstances they'll have to deal with."

Incidents could include threats of bombs, or threats of suicide by young athletes who must return home empty-handed, he suggested.

Congram set out from his home just east of Windsor, Ont., on Jan. 21 and will spend almost six weeks in Vancouver.

Athletes and their coaches will also receive spiritual support, as chaplains from all five major religions will be assigned to the various Olympic villages. ■ —C.Purvis

## Resource Key for New Ministers

Newly ordained ministers can get a head start with a gift from national offices: a USB flash drive containing resources from the Vine and other agencies.

The "resource key" is emblazoned with the church's burning bush logo and is compatible with most operating systems. It contains many staple resources such as the General Assembly's Acts and Proceedings, the Book of Forms, Living Faith and the Social Action Handbook as well as guidance for working with sessions and developing leadership in the church.

This is the second year flash drives have been given to new ministers. They can also be ordered from the Book Room for \$15—C.P. ■



# McGill Partnering with Tony Blair

Presbyterians to benefit from new program. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

MCGILL UNIVERSITY has become the first Canadian university to partner with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's Faith and Globalisation Initiative, a global network of universities exploring the complex interrelationship of faith and globalisation.

Presbyterian College, Montreal, through its affiliation with McGill, will be involved in this new venture. Students will have access to the new courses and the resources being offered. One of the McGill courses required of PC students, Christianity in a Global Perspective, will be revised in light of participation in the new program.

"As we educate and equip church leaders for the 21st century, this new program will expand the exposure of our theological students to Christianity as a global phenomenon," PC principal Rev. Dr. John Vissers told the *Record*, "and introduce them to the best minds thinking about the public dimensions of religion today."

McGill will develop a new, multi-disciplinary course for 120 students, and will host conferences, public

lectures, events and campus activities.

The Montreal university joins Yale University, the National University of Singapore and Durham University in the UK. Discussions are underway with universities in China, India, Australia and Latin America to ensure the network includes numerous geographies and cultural traditions. McGill's program will focus particularly on the Canadian perspective, from the origin of human rights to indigenous peoples.

"As globalisation pushes people closer together we need to understand how the relations between people of different religious faiths can shape societies for good or ill," said former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, patron of the foundation, in a McGill press release. "Our next generation of leaders needs access to the insights of renowned thinkers such as those at McGill. Canada is known around the world as a nation that welcomes and celebrates diversity, it is a testament to the fact that cultural variety can be a great source of strength." ■

# New Zealand Cuts Presbyteries from Five to One

FIVE PRESBYTERIES, encompassing all Presbyterian parishes within Southland and Otago below the Waitaki River in New Zealand, are joining together to form the Southern Presbytery. The presbyteries will be united in February to better connect with their communities and to try and attract more youthful members.

The merger will create central governance for all parishes controlling such things as property trading and administration.

The decision was based on a desire to free up people for missionary work rather than tying them down in administration roles, said Rev. Geoffrey Vine, facilitator for the combined presbyteries reform team.

A task force had worked on the merger for a year, following a decision at the 2008 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand that the number of presbyteries be reduced, with North Otago and Dunedin merging into one presbytery later that year.

The presbyteries had been independent for about 150 years, and this was the "biggest shake-up" the church had undertaken during this time, said Vine.

The move to a single presbytery meant the church had come "full circle" since Thomas Burns established the Presbytery of Otago in the 1850s.

The decision will not affect jobs or reduce the number of churches.

"It marks an important new direction for the Presbyterian Church as ministers and elders, freed of the cumbersome work of governance issues, will be seeking a higher profile in the community."

The Southern Presbytery will merge on Feb. 13 at Calvin Church in Gore, and will be ratified in October by the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. ■—*Otago Daily Times and The Southland Times*

## Rallying for Quake-Stricken Haiti

AS TRAUMATIZED RESIDENTS wandered through the ruins of Port-au-Prince after an earthquake devastated the region on Jan. 12, support for relief efforts was already pouring into Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Two days after the quake, the church's relief agency sent an initial \$50,000 for immediate efforts as the Action by Churches Together Alliance, a partner organization, coordinated work on the ground in the Caribbean nation.

On Jan. 14, the Canadian government announced it would match individuals' donations for Haiti up to a maximum of \$50 million, for a combined total of \$100 million.

The 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the western half of the Caribbean island, destroying between 60 and 80 per cent of houses in Haiti's densely populated capital city and killing as many as 50,000, according to early estimates.

For more information about PWS&D relief efforts, see [Presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://Presbyterian.ca/pwsd). ■



The Other Six Days

# Seeing Jesus

Online. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

**The Homeless Church**

Though some churches claim to be “church without walls” this one literally is.  
[homelesschurch.org](http://homelesschurch.org)

**The Internet Monk**

Christian blogger Michael Spencer of Internet Monk considers himself a “post-evangelical” Southern Baptist but his main goal is seeking out what “Jesus-Shaped Christianity” would look like. Let’s just say he thinks the church doesn’t do a very good job of representing Jesus.  
[internetmonk.com](http://internetmonk.com)

**The Passion**

From [sandstory.com](http://sandstory.com) comes the work of artist Joe Castillo. Usually hired to do performances at business conferences and mega-churches, Joe performs “art sermons” where he illustrates the Bible during his message.  
Search YouTube for: Joe Castillo passion

**Expelled**

This documentary, hosted by actor Ben Stein, is an investigation into Big Science and its rejection of intelligent design. The film is controversial and I agree with about 50 per cent of it. Still, more than anything else, the film is about academic freedom. You simply must watch his closing interview with Richard Dawkins.  
[expelledthemovie.com](http://expelledthemovie.com)

**The Gospel According to the Simpsons**

“Well, I may not know much about God, but I have to say, we’ve built a pretty nice cage for him.”  
—Homer Simpson after building a church as a missionary. ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

# Change is happening!



photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT

Through PWS&D, our church is actively working to build new futures of hope and opportunity for people in need around the world, including this child, displaced by conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. People's lives are improving through innovative programs in education, agriculture, health care, clean water and nutrition. Please help us continue this important work through your prayers and donations. To learn more visit [www.presbyterian.org/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.org/pwsd).

## Yes! I want to help transform our world!

Enclosed is my donation to PWS&D for: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Seeing Christ's Love

A trip to Eastern Europe opens eyes to the work of Presbyterian missionaries. BY MARIE GLOVER

ON APRIL 28, 2009 eight women from the Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough landed in Budapest. Wow! The flowers were in full bloom. Church steeples rose all over the city. And the architecture was beautiful, but buildings were still in need of repair; some even had mortar holes in them from the Second World War.

We had felt called to go on the 12-day mission exposure trip, which would take us to Hungary, Romania and Ukraine under the guidance of David Pandy-Szekeres, a Presbyterian missionary and supervisor of external missions with the Reformed Church of

Sub-Carpathian Ukraine.

We saw the greatest cultural differences in rural towns and villages. In Romania we passed a horse pulling a cart of hay, then a few minutes later a Ferrari flew past us.

We traveled to Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in time to hear PCC-missionary Brian Johnston's choir, which is composed of students from the theological seminary where he teaches English. We learned of his concern for a talented music student who has been living in dire circumstances, having been abandoned by his parents. Brian has taken him under his wing by ministering to his financial, musical and spiritual needs.

The roles of our missionaries are more complex and multifaceted than most of us would ever imagine. During our travels, David was a tireless worker. Along with being our guide and driver, he managed to continue with many of his duties via cellphone. We learned that one of his roles is seeking out funding throughout Europe and North America for the many

projects he oversees, and trying to stretch the money as far as possible.

Throughout our journey, we saw many interesting projects at work. The Terra Dei Foundation's model farm was testing various crops to find out what grows best, and teaching farmers some of the knowledge that was lost when farms were run by the Communist state and work was compartmentalized.

Another highlight was meeting a wonderful couple that has been making a great difference in the lives of some of the Roma people, commonly known as gypsies. They have been gradually renovating a multi-purpose building that is providing religious instruction, nursery school, work skills training, recreation and a meeting place. We visited the one-room home of a Roma family who welcomed us with hugs and smiles on their faces. With their strong belief in God and the care and support of this generous couple, whom we saw as true disciples of Jesus, this Roma family has become self-sufficient.

On our way back to Budapest we traveled to Sarospatak, Hungary, David's hometown, where we met his wife and children. We found that missionary families sacrifice so much. The family sees David fleetingly, and so much falls on the shoulders of his wife, Anna.

At the Reformed Church College, we were privileged to meet with Dr. Daniel Szabo, a gentle man who lived under the Communist dictatorship for 40 years. He told us, "God's word is able to change the heart. We must love people to Christ."

We listened to the call to go on this trip, and it showed us there is mission work needed all over the world, even right here at home. ■

*Marie Glover attends St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.*



**A Roma couple in a horse-drawn carriage (top); Three boys at an outdoor Reformed Church service in a Roma village in Ukraine (left); David Pandy-Szekeres shops at a roadside stand (right).**





## Letter from Pakistan

# Beyond the Images of War and Terror

Empowering women key to change. BY SHAMA MALL

DURING A VISIT TO CANADA last fall, I was repeatedly confronted by the question: Is it worth investing resources and effort in development initiatives in Pakistan? This question was probably generated by negative images in the media about the ongoing conflict with extremists in Pakistan, which is taking its toll on the Pakistani public's security and well-being. Suicide bombings are a daily occurrence in parts of Pakistan, killing countless civilians.

There is no doubt that extremism and the resulting conflicts are huge setbacks for development; for instance, since May 2009 over three million people have been displaced from the northern areas where the conflict is concentrated. Girls' education has faced a huge setback; in Swat about 200 girls' schools have been destroyed by extremists. Lives and livelihoods have been uprooted. Coupled with this are the daily realities of inflation, a rise in food prices, and water scarcity which is affecting the agricultural productivity of small farmers, especially in the province of Sindh.

It is precisely in conditions such as these that compassion and support can go a long way in providing hope in the lives of those who suffer the most. It is the untold stories of change, often not picked up by the media, that motivate and empower people, especially at the grass-roots level. Presbyterian World Service and Development in partnership with Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan recognizes the necessity of remaining committed to the needs of the most vulnerable in Pakistan. Besides responding to the immediate needs of people suffering as a result of the recent displacement, PWS&D is engaged in long-term development programs. These address food insecurity, improving livelihoods and promoting

women's empowerment. As I responded to questions about whether Pakistan is truly worth it, images of women and men from the communities we work

**We have seen that a little organizing, mobilization and education can go a long way in boosting women's confidence**

with came to my mind—people who are an inspiration to others. I was able to share stories of conviction, courage and change from some of the projects that are supported by PWS&D.

We have seen that a little organization, mobilization and education can go a long way in boosting women's confidence to step out of the routine confines of their roles to make more meaningful contributions towards family well-being and decision-making. Sardar Begum is one of these women, who is part of a women's group that saves money regularly so women can take out small loans on a rotational basis. With a loan of just \$33,



Sardar Begum tends to the goat she bought with a loan from the women's saving group at Haji Jabero Village, Pakistan.

Sardar Begum bought a small male goat. She anticipates selling him some months later for about \$110. Not only will she be able to repay the loan, but with the profit she will help her husband buy seeds for the next crop. Similarly, Amina Bibi is running a small tuck shop with a loan of only \$12, with returns of \$30 per month. Economic empowerment has helped change women's status in their families, channeling resources towards the health and education of their children. Such change has a multiplication effect, not only on the well-being of immediate family members but also as a way to motivate and inspire other women. There are countless other stories of women and men who have transformed their lives, ridding themselves of debt and exploitation. We must not let the images and news of violence overshadow the stories of hope and change. ■

*Shama Mall is deputy director of Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan. Read more about her work in the December 2009 issue of the Record.*





Seek to be

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MUSIC IS CAPABLE OF BEING SENSUAL, CEREBRAL, MYSTICAL, PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL.

BY GORDON MCCROSTIE

*The concept of church has changed in our secular ultra-individualistic society. Christians often don't see it as a biblical imperative, rather as a voluntary organization for companionship or social service. If a church does not meet our individual needs we either demand change, move to a different church or stop attending altogether. There is little sense of allegiance or duty to a church or even to a denomination.*

I believe that a significant part of the problem we face as a denomination is one of communication in worship. We come to worship to encounter God—to open our hearts and minds to something greater than our own humanity. Worship that does not enable participants to encounter God and allow them to be transformed on some level is not perceived as

being authentic. If worship is perceived as being inauthentic it is deemed to be irrelevant. Methodist theologian Leonard Sweet remarks that: "It is one thing to talk about God. It is quite another thing to experience God."

The challenge is to find how to engage the wide diversity of people found in our complex society with God through our worship, including younger generations with a radically different conception of reality referred to as postmodernity. Of course, revitalizing worship is not the only answer, but I believe it to be the fundamental one. We have to communicate the message with the fullness of human expression: intellectually, emotionally, intuitively and sensually. We need to be bold to explore authentic Christian expression of the mystical. The primary challenge is one of communication and implementation. This will involve enhanced use of the arts (particularly music) and rediscovering voices from the ancient church as well as from those around the world and of all living generations.

It is not a worship leader's job to create the desire for communion with God, but to create an environment that allows for this to happen. I believe the creative use of music in worship can make a huge difference in the effectiveness ➤





## Creativity sometimes means choosing the not-so-obvious, or choosing a hymn that may not have as much lyric content depth but can engage worshippers on another level

of this communication. Music is a language of the heart that allows us to move beyond the cerebral suppression of emotion. It is an ecstatic medium—there is an overflowing of expression that is more than intellectual intent. It is able to transcend the analyzable. Music is capable of being sensual, cerebral, mystical, physical, and metaphysical at the same time. More than any other medium, music can seamlessly cross generational, historical and ethnic boundaries. We can experience the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition. This speaks directly to postmodern sensibility. Music is possibly the single most important worship vehicle in drawing together this diversity.

Thomas Long of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, describes vital congregations having an increased use of music in worship. Music is used to gather people, to reinforce a reading, to generate a sense of mystery, to express thanksgiving, joy, sorrow, to surround the offerings of the people, and to send the people into the world to service. Congregational music-making is cultivated through all of this—led by professional music worship leaders. Excellence is described as music that empowers the congregation and gives the congregation a means to express the thoughts and feelings of their worship. Long emphasizes the need to develop a congregational ethic of tolerance and mutual participation.

The 1997 Presbyterian *Book of Praise* contains a significant diversity of music, but it needs to be used much more effectively. Choosing hymns based solely on lyric content is ineffective worship communication. Of course lyric content is a very important parameter in choosing hymns, but stylistic diversity is important as well—where stylistic is defined as the musical context through which the words are communicated.

It is important that at least one of the worship planners become intimately familiar with the *Book of Praise* (this is a long-term project). Creativity sometimes means choosing the not-so-obvious, or choosing a hymn that may not have as much lyric content depth but can engage worshippers on another level. Many ethnic and contemporary hymns do not have the depth of content that some classic hymns

have. Their strength, however, can often be greater because their experiential nature speaks more directly to certain generations.

There needs to be more intentionality about choosing diverse hymns. You can't cover all bases every Sunday, but I think that if a worship service has four out of four traditional hymns it is exhibiting a narrow theological communication, regardless of the lyric content (the same goes for choosing four contemporary hymns). Ethnic hymns take a different intentionality. I have found that people of all generations respond to the freshness and vitality of African, Latin American, Jewish, and other songs for worship included in the *Book of Praise*. They do need a certain amount of interpretive expertise by music leaders to ensure stylistic integrity. The ethnic experience can sometimes be heightened by singing these hymns in their original languages (published in the *Book of Praise* alongside the English translations).

Many congregations are supplementing music from the hymnal with music from the Iona and Taizé communities (the *Book of Praise* contains a number of pieces from both of these communities). Particularly for responses, the global music found in volumes from these communities is invaluable in broadening our vision of God. There are many creative ways to use responses to highlight liturgical seasons and service themes with the goal of developing a congregation's repertoire of varied memory-based responses.

Balance comes into play in the long-term objective of helping a congregation find its singing voice, and in teaching a congregation to understand the theological importance of expanding its vision of God by constantly learning and challenging itself. This is an act of worship. Use of a cappella singing can also help us rediscover the immediacy and sacred sensuality of singing. Use of hand drums (such as African djembe) can help us rediscover the vitality and sacred physicality of rhythm. Use of re-contextualized accompaniment can help us rediscover the sacred contemporary value of traditional hymns. On the practical side, no one likes to be constantly fumbling with new melodies. It takes sensitivity as well as persistence to strike the right balance of familiar and unfamiliar. The fact is, some criticism is inevitable no matter how slow you go.

Part of developing an emotional contour in worship is utilizing the right resources, and there are many, from African-American spirituals to responses from the Taizé community, to contemporary choruses. This is not content music; it is encounter music. It is easy to memorize and is often repetitious (but with some layers of spontaneity and variation). Repetition in music (whether meditative or celebratory) is sometimes a challenge for older generations that are often not used to this form of music. Leaders need to develop in their congregations a culture of tolerance and



respect for expression that is not some people's primary preference, if they are serious about including all generations in worship. Developing this culture is a long-term objective.

Andrew Donaldson, co-editor of the *Book of Praise* says: "Two words that are important for how Presbyterians can change worship are: play and passion. Rhythm, body, drama are more words. Presbyterians tend to equate seriousness with solemnity and elevate solemnity above all other virtues. And by solemnity I mean a kind of ceremonial deliberation and slowness. I think we need to understand that we are physical creatures. And I think we need, both as singers and as movers, to express the other sides of the human reality." Presbyterians have always valued music in worship. Effective communication in worship will need even more emphasis placed on music. This means not only singing more in worship, but also being creative in the use of music throughout the service.

Some will undoubtedly think I have not gone far enough in my proposals for worship reform, just as others will think I have gone too far. That is the nature of church.

There is no correct way of making worship a transforming experience—it is God who makes worship transformational. The gifts and skills of worship leaders and members of the congregation will determine specific approaches. Creative design and implementation of worship involves collaboration in order to achieve biblical and aesthetic integrity. There is a future for Presbyterianism in Canada, but not a guaranteed future. Our denomination needs to be able to demonstrate that it is capable of effectively communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to our current reality. The focus of our discussion needs to shift from what we are not prepared to do, to what we are prepared to do to accomplish this task. We must follow our stated vision: "We will seek to be changed, to be reformed, to take whatever risks are necessary as we learn to obey God's will ..." (PCC Vision Statement, 1989) ■

*This article is a brief glimpse into Gordon McCrostie's expansive thesis, Directions in Presbyterian Worship for the 21st Century, written for his master of theological studies degree at St. Stephen's College, Edmonton. A series of study guides on worship renewal based on McCrostie's thesis are available through the Vine—[presbyterian.ca/thevine](http://presbyterian.ca/thevine).*







# Jump with Joy

FIVE HYMNS ABOUT US.  
BY HILARY DONALDSON

*What can the Book of Praise tell us about our identity as Canadian Presbyterians? That was the challenge I took for my term paper in pursuit of a master's degree in sacred music at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. On a large spreadsheet I put the contents of the book into various streams, such as folk hymns, praise and worship music, classic hymns, global songs, gospel songs, and more. Then I had to choose five to share with my class. This was patently excruciating—so many great hymns, so little time! I invite you to consider the five hymns I chose to sing with my class, and how I feel they represent our piety as members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

## WITH THE LORD AS MY GUIDE

Jim Strathdee (#574)

Many of the hymns we sing are creedal—in singing them, we sing what we believe. This hymn expresses a sturdy, resolute faith in God, which is supported by the many scriptural allusions in the text. By faith, this hymn says, we will face

the trials of the wilderness like our Israelite forbears, accept God's commands to us as Moses did on Mount Sinai, and become aware of the great eternal spring, which wells up inside each of us, as Christ revealed to the Samaritan woman at the well. Scriptural paraphrase and allusion play an important part in our denomination's hymns, which reflect our Reformed heritage and our continual looking to scripture for guidance and strength. This hymn also reflects the rich vein of folk-inspired hymns in the *Book of Praise*. This musical idiom appeals to us uniquely as Canadians, with our singer-songwriter tradition in homegrown talent such as Bruce Cockburn, Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and the more recent voices of Rufus Wainwright and Feist. The sturdiness of the words calls out for an equally sturdy, rollicking tempo—I can hear fiddle, penny whistle and Celtic-style drum (bodhrán) as possible accompaniments.

## JUMP WITH JOY

from Malawi, Chichewa chorus,  
translated by Clara Henderson (#406)

This exuberant call-and-response song is an example of the smaller songs included in our hymnal for moments of



joyful praise in the community. A leader, such as the music director, a small group of youth or the choir can sing the initial call lines, with the congregation providing the responses. Throw in a drum and shakers and away we go. In my home congregation we have sung it during the time for the children, who provide the jumping with expert skill. Canadian missionary Clara Henderson, who lives and works in Malawi, translated this song from its original language. It represents both the wide variety of global Christian song represented in the book, and the missional aspect of our church's mandate through its global partnerships forged by Presbyterian World Service and Development.

### GOD IS LOVE: COME HEAVEN, ADORING

Timothy Rees (#314)

Part of the mandate of the *Book of Praise* task force was to update hymn texts whose language had become dated, while remaining sensitive to the theology, poetry and context of the original. This hymn, originally titled *God is Love, Let Heaven Adore Him*, was revised in a team effort. The strength of the revision lies in the new perspective it brings to the hymn. Where the earlier version used a more passive sentence structure, the revision employs imperative language, inciting the very foundations of the earth to bring praises to God. The earlier line "Let creation sing before Him" gives way to the arresting image, "Come creation, voices soaring..." Seamless, sensitive revisions such as this one ensure that the hymns of the past continue to speak to the present and look toward the faith community to come.

### ALTHOUGH I SPEAK WITH ANGEL'S TONGUE

1 Corinthians 13,

paraphrased by Andrew Donaldson (#695)

This hymn, like *God is Love: Come Heaven, Adoring*, represents the largest single tradition in our hymnal: that of classic, multi-stanza, poetic hymns, especially as written after the Second Vatican Council by poets such as Fred Pratt Green, Brian Wren, Sylvia Dunstan, Margaret Clarkson and Michael Perry, to name a few. This type of hymn has a rational, exegetical focus that is important to our piety—they articulate in reasoned terms how we understand our faith. Scriptural paraphrase is also a focus of

this idiom, as in this one from Paul's letter to the Corinthians (full disclosure: composer and church musician Andrew Donaldson, who was co-editor of the *Book of Praise*, is my dad). The art of this form is to take only the words of scripture and work them into the metre for the hymn text. This example is beautifully paired with the Newfoundland folk melody *She's Like the Swallow*. Newfoundlanders may be tickled to know that a small pocket of students in Dallas now know this lovely tune.

### O LORD, OUR LORD, HOW MAJESTIC IS YOUR NAME

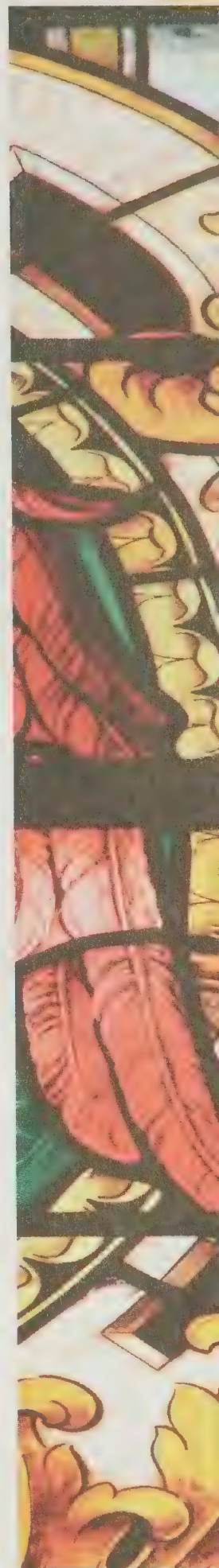
Michael W. Smith (#409)

This hymn represents the hands-clapping, toe-tapping side of worship expressed especially by Presbyterian youth at gatherings such as Canada Youth and Triennium. However, its driving rhythms and syncopation can be enjoyed at any age. Reading, singing and praying the Psalms is an important aspect of our Presbyterian heritage, and this hymn provides a joyful expression of Psalm 8. It appears as a Psalm refrain in the companion *Book of Psalms* used in many congregations. It would work equally well with rhythmically driven piano accompaniment or played by a praise team with electric guitar, bass and drums. While contemporary or praise and worship music occupies only a small portion of the hymnbook, it represents a growing movement in the church, and deserves a place in the discussion as we contemplate our future.

This project taught me that our denomination's hymnal contains a wide variety of materials for expressing our faith through song. I came across many hymns I had never sung before, and many that I hadn't known were in the book. Inevitably, each congregation that uses the *Book of Praise* will develop its own canon of hymns that speak to its own community and particular piety. A list of five representative hymns would look very different from one congregation to the next. I would be interested to know what your congregation's canon looks like—but I warn you, the hard part will be choosing only five! ■

online extra

YOU CAN ADD YOUR LIST TO HILARY'S ON OUR WEBSITE:  
PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA.







# The Promise of Pentecost

SINGING OUR NEIGHBOUR'S SONGS.  
BY ANDREW DONALDSON

*It may be that the worship wars—and the contemporary vs. traditional, worship band vs. organ attitudes that went with them—are over. It may be that other conflicts are brewing in the underbrush. It hardly matters. Hidden behind the headlines has been another change: quieter and more profound than the question, “Should we sing Isaac Watts or Matt Redman?” This change has been underway since the early 1980s. It’s difficult to put a name to it and, the more you look at it, even harder to define. Some call it “global music,” others recognize it as simply the song of the world church.*

It’s true, of course, that hymnals draw from many traditions. The 1972 *Book of Praise* offered German chorales, French Reformation hymns and Spanish, English and Swiss folk songs. But they were almost exclusively European and North American. Even the folk songs were filtered through classical music’s common practice: no strange dissonances and jarring syncopations, thank you very much.

The songs of the global church represent many more

cultures and use a greater variety of forms: freedom songs from South Africa, sambas from South America, songs from Taiwan and chants from Taizé. In addition, the use of global music has brought with it an attempt to mirror the sounds, the languages and the rhythms of the sources. These ways of singing, even more than the songs and hymns themselves, have changed the ways we sing together.

How? First, some history.

The change started gathering momentum in 1983 in Vancouver, where the World Council of Churches held its sixth assembly. Though global song was only part of the whole event, it deeply moved the participants. Rev. Drew Strickland called the music in the worship tent a “spine-tingling, visceral experience.”

The council followed the Vancouver event with worship workshops in Odense, Denmark and Kitwe, Zambia and Crieff Hills, Ont. I was at the Crieff Hills workshop, a 10-day event in which we experienced new languages, forms, rhythms and sounds, and worked together to craft a common liturgy. We explored many issues: why global



song is so difficult to define, what are acceptable ways of using music from other cultures, what musical forms are appropriate for worship. We worked with many worship animators, or enliveners, among them Argentinian pastor and composer Pablo Sosa, Zimbabwean composer Patrick Matsikenyiri and Paschal Jordan, a Benedictine brother from Trinidad and Tobago (now working in Guyana). But as important as the music sung on this particular week in 1988 was the fact that this group included pastors, composers, writers and editors who would shape denominational hymnbooks in North America in the following decades.

The most influential songbook from this time, one that foreshadowed the global content of the denominational hymnbooks, was published in Sweden in 1980. *Freedom is Coming!* appeared after a Swedish singing group returned from a visit to South Africa singing songs such as *Siyahamba, Halleluja Pelo Tsa Rona*, and *Freedom is Coming*. These songs helped give the anti-apartheid movement outside of South Africa a singing voice, and have since travelled the world.

Important as I believe these turning points to be, it has been the work of individual song leaders that has helped introduce North American congregations to the songs of the world church. John Bell and Pablo Sosa are the best known names among them, but their number and their influence are growing. Each brings a different temperament, theology and culture to their work of song animation; what they have in common is a commitment to congregational song. The songs they teach also share some key elements:

- The importance of melody
- Short texts
- The importance of physical involvement: rhythm, movement, dance and gesture
- Singing in original languages as well as the singer's native language

So ... how does singing songs of the world church change how congregations sing?

Global song is largely drawn from folk music and popular song—melodies for the ordinary singing voice. Through the work of the song animators and worship enliveners, congregations are rediscovering the joy of singing together. The short texts allow congregations to carry songs with them. I believe that neither our use of bound books or video screens will disappear. But songs

that have been memorized give us the ability to make "melody without ceasing ... giving thanks to God the Father at all times." Children are naturally drawn to these short songs, but not only children: these songs help adults who struggle with reading participate in worship.

Physical movement—dancing, gesturing, signing—has long been considered an unwelcome disruption of the core values of churches that preach (and practice) solemnity, quiet reverence and sober praise. The rhythms of global music offer more than mere entertainment. They embody the vision and promise of Pentecost, where faithful pilgrims from all parts of the world sing of God's great acts in their own language—and everyone hears and understands.

Singing in other languages, congregations are realizing, is something Christian churches have always done. Singing in Shona or Zulu is no different from singing in Hebrew, Latin or Greek. "Alleluia," "Maranatha," "Gloria in excelsis Deo," "Kyrie eleison"—these are all phrases that, paradoxically, mean more when they are not translated. They become part of the texture of our worship, reminding us that we are deeply connected in our present and our past to others who worship the living God.

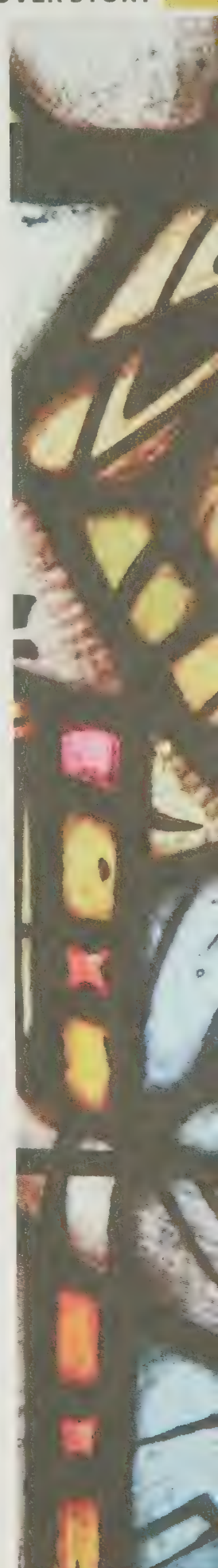
Are the worship wars over? Who knows? In the meantime, I propose we replace either/or, with both/and. Both contemporary and ancient, both hymn and song, both local and global.

Dallas hymn-writer John Thornburg, another teacher of congregational song, believes we should sing not only our own song, our favourite hymns, but also the song of the person next to us in the pew. Amen, I say, and add this: songs of the world church are the songs of our neighbour. In singing the world church, the whole church, we just might be singing the song of the one who isn't sitting next to us—yet. ■

*Andrew Donaldson is the music director at Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont. He was an editor for the 1997 Book of Praise.*

#### online extra

**YOU CAN READ ANDREW DONALDSON'S INSTRUCTIONAL CHURCH MUSIC BLOG, IN SONG, ON OUR WEBSITE, [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA).**







# Singing a New Song

WITH A HEART OF WORSHIP. BY JAYNE SELF

*Worship is a complicated thing. Jesus said we are to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. But what does that mean? Simply put: true worship exists only when God's Spirit is present. God, whose creativity is limitless, who made every snowflake and fingerprint unique, lives outside the box. He calls us to do the same. I think that's why I enjoy contemporary praise and worship music. It is music that's outside the box.*

*I've recently asked people in our church if they enjoy*

*the contemporary worship songs we sing at the beginning of our Sunday services and if so, why. Their answers have expressed individual preferences and commonalities.*

*"When I arrive at church, still preoccupied with worries like my job, or an argument I had with my wife, the music helps change my focus. It draws my attention away from me and towards God."*

*"It lifts my soul and I can feel God speaking to me."*

*"The words are like my words. They reflect the way I feel."*



**"It's more than the words. It's the music, the way the instrumentation swells, the way the beat changes—it triggers my emotions."**

"They're personal. Hymns are about corporate worship, but for me, when I sing worship songs there are only two people in the room—God and me."

"I love music. It's the centre of my life. But I can't pick up my guitar and play most hymns. They're too complicated. Worship songs are for everyday musicians like me."

"I feel God's peace when I sing them, in a way I don't feel when I sing hymns, though I love singing old hymns too."

"Worship music speaks to my kids. And when it speaks to my kids it speaks to me."

"I create my own harmonies when I sing, so every time it's a new song. I know my being able to do that is a gift from God. So I give the gift back to Him every time I sing."

We live in a generation that's more familiar with electric guitars than pipe organs. From today's grandparents down, we've grown up listening to rock and roll. It's the musical backdrop of our lives. And if we are to authentically express our faith and worship God, it must be in our own language.

That does not negate the value of traditional church music. I'm quite convinced God enjoys Gregorian chants, Baroque oratorios, Wesleyan hymns, country gospel and contemporary worship songs equally, if they are sung with a heart of worship. Otherwise, we've missed the point and our music, no matter how beautiful, is a clanging symbol or a sounding gong in God's ears.

During the late 1990s, a church in Watford, England, lost its musical focus. People came from miles around to hear each Sunday's performance, drawn by the thrill of their dynamic music ministry. Worshipping God, however, became a secondary concern. The pastor was disturbed by this misplaced allegiance and cancelled all music for a period of time. When the fast finished,

worship leader Matt Redman wrote,

*When the music fades,  
all has slipped away and I simply come  
Longing just to bring something  
that's of worth that will bless your heart.  
I'll bring you more than a song;  
for a song in itself is not what you have required.  
You search much deeper within through the way  
things appear, you're looking into my heart.*

Music is at the heart of worship. It is intimate, emotional. It expresses our passion for the God we adore. It is a reflection of who we are at our most basic level.

Joni Eareckson Tada once said, "We are finite creatures, and although God chooses to live in us, we cannot contain His infinite nature."

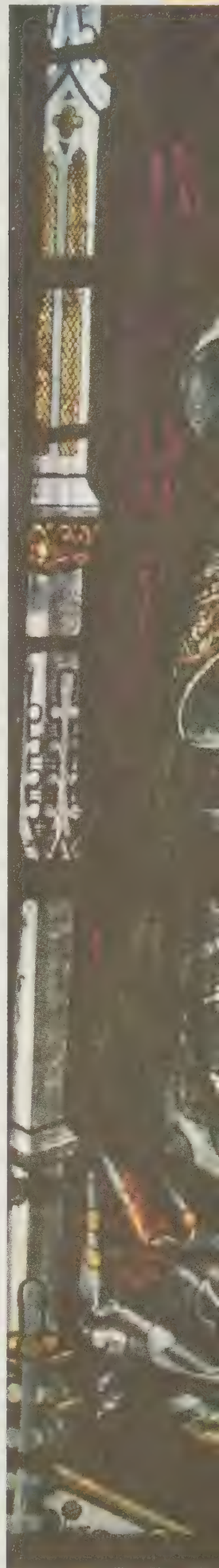
I think of that whenever I open myself to Him in worship. Sometimes my tears flow—not a very attractive idea for a control-loving Presbyterian like me. But if my worship is to be authentic, it has to be about Jesus, not me. I need to put aside my personal security and open myself to His touch. And for me it's through contemporary worship songs that I am the most real before God. ■

Jayne Self is a freelance writer in Orangeville, Ont., and is a member of the Word Guild.

### Not all contemporary Christian music is created equal

Christian bands such as Skillet and As I Lay Dying use music as an evangelistic tool, introducing audiences who are unfamiliar and even antagonistic toward the church and to the gospel message of love and forgiveness. "People may think the song consists of few lines with repetitive lyrics. It intentionally avoids complex terminology and musical form, enabling the unchurched worshipper to focus on one idea being presented."

Musicians and worship leaders Chris Tomlin and Robin Mark introduce theological concepts into their songs. Lyrics use current vernacular and avoid Christian clichés. Music is designed to complement and strengthen the emotional impact.







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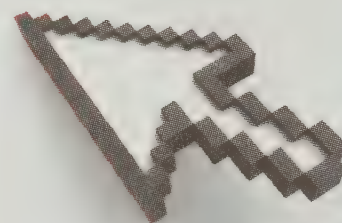
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**website: campkannawin.ca**

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## British Columbia

### **CAMP DOUGLAS**

**website: campdouglas.ca**

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**email: dutchharbour@theeastshore.net**

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**website: campvip.org**

Encompassing Vancouver Island, B.C., Camp VIP (Vancouver Island Presbytery) offers camping programs for all ages. Supported mainly by volunteers, our ministry provides discipleship, leadership, service and community both indoors and out, keeping campers and leaders connected to their Creator through nature and creativity.

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**website: cb.pccatlantic.ca/camp.html**

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**website: campgeddie.ca**

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### **CAIRN CAMPING AND RETREAT CENTRES**

**website: ilovecamp.org**

Cairn is the camping ministry for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, and home to Glen Mhor, Iona, Presbyterian Music Camp and Dorothy Lake Family Camp. 2010 marks Glen Mhor's 80th anniversary of camping excellence. Let the celebration begin!





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## Saskatchewan

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website: [campchristopher.ca](http://campchristopher.ca)

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## God by the Book

GOD IS GOD. BY JOHN VISSERS

Judging by how much ink is being spilled these days on books about the divine, God is alive and well, at least in print. Visit your local bookstore, any will do, and you will likely find titles with God front and centre. Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens may think they've delivered the knockout punch to faith in a secular age, but God keeps bouncing back, the ultimate come-back kid. Let me mention just a few titles worth reading.

One of the brightest and best-selling advocates for God these days is

Karen Armstrong, a former nun who's written extensively about religion. In her new book, *The Case for God*, she argues in favour of something called *apophatic theology*: "the belief that human categories are not capable of conceptualizing God." Reacting to all the chatter about God today by atheists and religionists alike, she properly reminds us that God often prefers and merits silence. Not much can be said about God with certainty because the finite can neither contain nor comprehend the infinite. To quote Gregory of Nyssa: "Concepts create idols, only

wonder grasps anything."

In another interesting new book, *God Hides in Plain Sight: How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World*, journalism professor Dean Nelson takes a slightly different tact and writes, "For ►

### online extra

#### WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GOD?

THEOLOGY 101 (SECOND SEMESTER) CONTINUES BY POPULAR DEMAND INTO 2010. LED AGAIN BY REV. DR. JOSEPH MCLELLAND AND REV. DR. JOHN VISSERS ALONG WITH REV. DR. PAM MCCARROLL AND REV. DR. RICHARD TOPPING. AS BEFORE, A STUDY GUIDE CAN BE FOUND EACH MONTH AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)





## After you've dipped into the current conversation about God in the world today, you might want to go back and revisit some books by Christian writers, classic and contemporary

those with eyes to see glimpses of the divine are everywhere." Nelson suggests we should seek the Lord where He may be found, in everyday life, in the ordinary means of grace, in the sacraments, the word, and prayer. As one reviewer notes, "Nelson's stories bespeak the God who revealed Himself to Elijah not in an earthquake or a fire but in a whisper."

For a global perspective, you may want to check out *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World* by John Micklewait and Adrian Wooldridge. Micklewait is editor in chief of *The Economist* and Wooldridge is its Washington bureau staff person. They take a look at how and why religious faith is booming around the world in places like Russia and Turkey and India and Nigeria and Brazil and China. Rather than killing religion, modernization has spawned a revival of faith. Whether we like it or not, in today's world God really does matter.

If you're up to a more challenging read I suggest *The Evolution of God* by Robert Wright. The author takes us on a sweeping journey through the histories of the three Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and tries to show a pattern of evolution in each. He thinks the faith experienced in these three related traditions points to transcendent ideals with common spiritual and ethical values. In his judgment, this shows that "the religious quest is valid, and that a modern scientific worldview leaves room for something that can meaningfully be called divine."

For a decidedly Canadian (and somewhat prickly) take on all this you might want to pick up *God Is*. (the period is part of the title) by novelist David Adams Richards. Better known for his 2007 novel *The Lost Highway*, Richards writes about his search for faith in a secular world. As one reviewer notes, Richards challenges the trendy prejudices that militate against faith in a Canadian culture that values "niceness."

Those looking for a direct and critical response to Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens should go to *God and the New Atheism* by John F. Haught. It gives a clear analysis of the criticisms thrown against religious faith by the new atheists and offers concise (and sometimes compelling) answers to their charges.

After you've dipped into the current conversation about God in the world today, you might want to go back and revisit some books by Christian writers, classic and contemporary. You can't go wrong by starting with Augustine's *Confessions* and its stunning prayer "My heart was restless until it found its rest in Thee." Simone Weil's *Waiting For God* is a series of "profound meditations on the relationship of human life to the realm of the transcendent."

A.W. Tozer's book *The Knowledge of the Holy* is an extended meditation on the attributes of God and their meaning in the Christian life. The opening sentence stopped me in my tracks when I first read it many years ago: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing

about us." J.I. Packer's *Knowing God* has worn well for almost 40 years now. So has Henri Nouwen's *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*.

Three books from the last decade might also stimulate your thinking about the presence of God in today's world. *In Reaching for the Invisible God*, Philip Yancey explores what it means to have a relationship with a God we can't see, hear or touch. Can such a God really be known? Really be trusted? Ronald Rolheiser's *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* describes what happens when human desire is rightly redirected to God. And Marcus Borg explores different ways of conceiving the divine in *The God We Never Knew*. As this series unfolds I invite you to add your own suggestions to the list by logging on to the website at [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) and going to the comment section of the series.

One final observation: after I finished reviewing these books and writing this article I sat down and listened to one of my favourite CDs. It's called *Day After Tomorrow* and it features Joan Baez singing the songs of Steve Earle. Earle is known for his country rock sound and his outspoken views. He's a hardcore troubadour who's battled drugs and alcohol addiction, and in the past has had countless run-ins with the law which occasionally landed him in jail.

As a result of his hard-scrabble life, however, he has interesting insights into faith. The opening song on the Baez CD is called *God is God*. Earle's refrain runs like this: "I believe in God, and God ain't me ... I believe in God, and God ain't us ... I believe in God, and God is God." Those words echo the theologian Karl Barth almost a century ago: "You can't speak about God by speaking about human beings in a loud voice." That's worth remembering as we look for God's presence in a postmodern world. ■

*John Vissers is the principal of Presbyterian College, Montreal. His latest book is The Neo-Orthodox Theology of Walter W. Bryden.*





# Coming Alive in Lent

AND NAMING OUR FAILURES. **BY CALVIN BROWN**

**THE LADY** approached the minister after church and with a frown on her face declared that she didn't like the first prayer in the service (the prayer of repentance). She said it brought her down and that if he didn't promise to cease from this practice she would not be coming back. I also have had people tell me they do not like to hear the invitation to repentance either in prayer or sermon form or even in the reading of scripture.

There is something that makes many feel terribly uncomfortable about facing the fact that we "leave undone the things we ought to do and do the things we ought not to do and there is no health in us" (*Book of Common Prayer*). I remember one bold moderator made the theme of his year Repentance and that was the topic of his moderatorial sermon. I overheard several ministers at assembly say he hadn't been a popular moderator.

The incoming moderator, desiring to be more positive, made a point of saying what a wonderful church we were and how democratic and respectful, and how proud he was to belong. There is nothing wrong with being positive and recognizing the valuable things in our tradition but that should never be used so we can ignore the call to repent. Our church, it is clear, does need repentance. (Now I won't be popular for saying that!) ➤



## This failure to admit our faults prevents us from entering into the needed change and that prevents us from dealing with our weakness so we can be forgiven of past wrongs and empowered to make new beginnings

We need radical change if we are to make the difference that is so desperately needed to bring wholesome life in church and culture. We do need to be relevant and in touch with our culture but we also need to enter the role of the prophet (they weren't popular either!) who calls the people of God back to righteousness. What might some of this entail? I suggest places to begin to repent would be in the growing disregard of the authority of scripture, the lack of spiritual vitality in our congregations (as recently reported in the *Record*), the weak response to justice issues and lack of boldness in evangelism.

This failure to admit our faults

prevents us from entering into the needed change (the Bible calls this repentance) and that prevents us from dealing with our weakness so we can be forgiven of past wrongs and empowered to make new beginnings. It also quenches the hope we have of experiencing an increase in the joy and love of abundant life in Christ and instead puts a barrier up between us and Christ. Christians rightfully believe that only in Christ is there fullness of life. Our earnest prayer, which we pray with Jesus, is that "God's kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But this can't even begin to happen until we acknowledge and

confess our sin so he leads us to pray: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

As we enter the season of Lent, in which the church has recognized our need to repent, let us respond in faith and expectation of change to the bold invitation given in the 1978 *Book of Common Order*, which says: "Let us confess to God and to one another that we stand in need of forgiveness from Him and from our fellows, calling to mind our particular and our common faults. We name our self-indulgence, our prayerlessness, our enmities. We name our failures in the State, the dispeace of the world, the poverty and hunger of millions of people, and the constant strife of people with people. Let us together make our humble confession before Almighty God."

My prayer is that in this season of Lent, God will work in each of us and we will begin to see the big conversion (turn around) and the new vigour that Lent is supposed to bring. ■

Rev. Calvin Brown is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC.

Web: [Renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca](http://Renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca)



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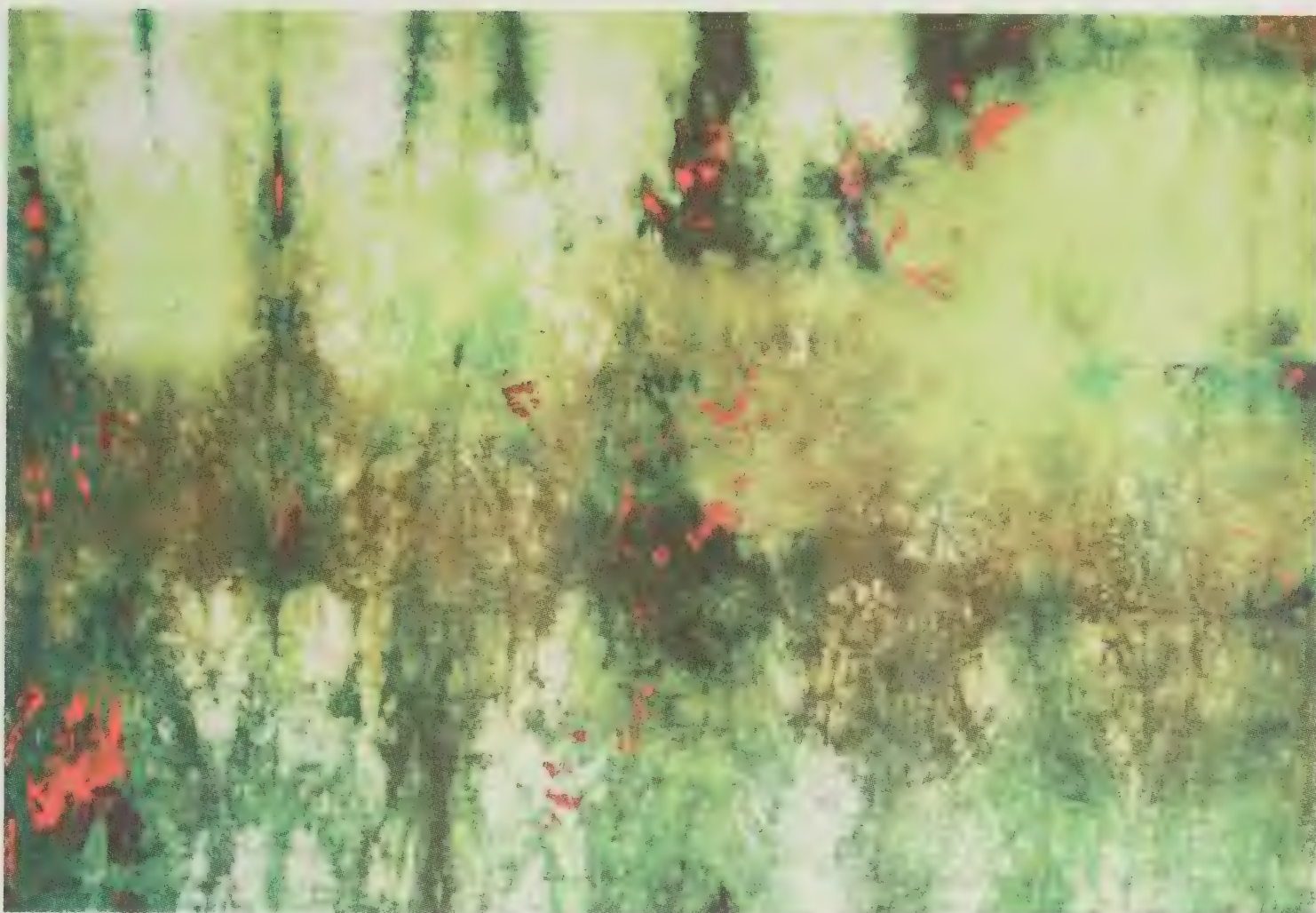
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I Come to The Garden Alone 15, 24"x24", mixed media on Korean paper

# Easter in Epiphany?

JESUS LIVES, AND THAT'S GOOD NEWS ANY TIME OF YEAR! **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

*February 7:  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
Luke 5:1-11*

**T**oday's gospel story is eerily similar to the post-Resurrection narrative in John 21. Luke makes it Peter's call, the beginning of his discipleship. John makes it the beginning of Peter's redemption. Both tales launch the mission of Peter and the church. Why mention this here? The pairing of Luke 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 sheds Easter light in February. Easter's life-light and Epiphany's starlight look much the same to me.

Both light our way into engagement with the world Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose to redeem.

What do we have to offer this world? Some scholars think 1 Corinthians 15 is one of the earliest records of the gospel as it was first preached. Perhaps even the first creedal statement. Paul says he taught, "as of first importance," what he was taught. His words echo and reverse the order of 11:23, where he says how he first came to know about the Lord's Table. That knowledge came directly "from the Lord." The gospel proclamation came from brothers and sisters who told him the truth.

The simplest confession of faith takes up the second half of verse three, all of verse four, and (perhaps) verse five. Paul goes on to show us that ➤

## about the artist – HENNA KIM

Henna Kim is originally from South Korea and currently resides in Canada. The October issue featured another of her paintings.

To purchase her art, contact Henna Kim:  
905-534-1045 (H)  
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the good news of Jesus alive again is the most important proclamation of all. Naming the people who met the risen Lord underlines the Resurrection as gospel. It also supports the truth Paul has received and preached. And the authority of the people who passed the word to him. Paul also asserts his own right to be called an apostle, but he does it with humility that recalls Peter in the boat (Luke 5:8). He, Peter, James, and the rest are all one. They preach the same good news.

When you and I share the good news, what do we say is "of first importance"? Is our gospel story all about the cross, with a happy ending tacked on? Or do we witness to a risen Lord? He died, yes! There's no gospel without the cross. The confident, daring witness of our ancestors in faith begins with the cross and goes on quickly to proclaim Jesus' resurrection. For Paul, that good news

is our only hope, the motive and guarantee of our mission.

"Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures ... and ... was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." For Paul and his brothers and sisters this doesn't mean word-for-word fulfillment of prophecies. "In accordance with the scriptures" means Jesus' death and resurrection embody what the scriptures reveal about God's way with the world. God's call to the faithful to trust and obey, even to death. God's power over death, and the assurance of vindication for those who give all for God's purposes. Yes, Jesus died. Living as he did, embodying God in the world, it seems rejection by the world was inevitable. Dying as he did, embodying God in the world, resurrection was inevitable, too! That's the good news.

No, there's no gospel without the

cross. But the news isn't good without resurrection. Lent approaches. The story we know too well begins to unfold. The shadow of the cross will soon fall on us. Let's remember, Sundays in Lent are not days of Lent. They're still days of resurrection. Is our gospel, "Jesus died, and all is struggle"? Or is our gospel, "Jesus is alive, and anything is possible"?

February 7 is Presbyterian World Service and Development Sunday. What authorizes our good work in the world? We dare to do what we do because we know Jesus is alive. When we reach out with relief to those on the brink of death, we share resurrection life. When we support development and education, we dare to build for a future others can't see. Because Jesus lives, we need not fear any future. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.*



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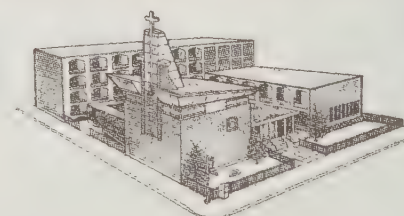
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# Lift Up Your Voice

JESUS IS THE SONG ON OUR JOURNEY. BY JOYCE GLADWELL

*I CRIED* when I heard the surgeon's report. Ten days earlier I'd had a hip replacement. My tears made me realize how anxious I was to find out whether all was well. It was. The surgeon reported that a bone graft had been necessary. Even so, he got "excellent press fit" between the rebuilt hip socket and the new prosthesis, and in addition "good stability ... with no tendency for dislocation." He also managed to keep both legs at equal length—an outcome he had been doubtful about. I have been fortunate. I found the words to express my relief and gratitude in a long-remembered hymn:

*Praise my soul the  
King of Heaven  
Ransomed, healed,  
restored, forgiven  
Who like me  
His praise should sing  
(Book of Praise #407)*

This was not my first experience of surgery. From previous occasions, I have learned to make the event a time of inquiry, and to challenge myself to make something of the experience: Where will I find God here? How will I grow and change?

The alternative is panic, a sense of being more than vulnerable—of being

a victim, helpless, passively subject to hospital procedures, and to the unspeakable invasion of the surgeon's knife. I could not escape that sense completely, but at least I could invent a counter activity.

What did I find this time? The good news was everywhere. God was present in all kinds of people, in the unfolding of events, and present in myself: "You are a trooper ... You are tough," the nurses said when they had to repeat a procedure eight times, and later six times, before it would work, and I managed to stay calm and patient.

My husband Graham had an infected cold and cough, so he could ➤



neither take me to the hospital nor come to visit me while I was there. My daughter-in-law, Bev, took over. As a chaplain in long-term care, she was ideal for the task, moving surely through the protocol and the maze of floors and corridors, and staying by me reassuringly as long as she was allowed. The nurse who prepared me for surgery was someone I knew from church. She gave me a quick hug, and her answers to my questions were matter-of-fact and straightforward.

During surgery, I could hear voices. For this operation, the hospital's policy is to encourage patients to choose spinal "freezing" rather than a general anaesthetic. They find this choice greatly improves the pace and quality of recovery. I complied. The sedation I was given blocked my other senses, but left my hearing intact. I assumed I was still being prepared for surgery when the attendant said: "It's all done." I was astonished. I had heard voices, but had neither felt nor seen what happened. One and a half hours of intense activity had passed like a dream.

In the ward where I spent the next four days, I was by a large window from which I could enjoy the changing sky, the city lights, the first snow-fall and the sunshine.



Lately, it was another hymn that showed me where I was stuck. It begins with a line I can joyfully endorse: "Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey"

There were three other women in the room; one a veteran patient and a "connector" who opened up the exchange of conversation among us. I warmed to her when I watched as her family gathered round, held hands and prayed together.

What do I make of all this? To receive so generous a measure of good things begs a response. The makings of my response have come to me

gradually over the years. I have learned to look to times like this as an opportunity to bring about change in myself, to make even a small shift in some habit or attitude I deplore in myself, yet seem unable to leave behind. Lately, it was another hymn that showed me where I was stuck. It begins with a line I can joyfully endorse:

"Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey." (#665)

However I would balk at the third verse:

*As long as I live,  
Jesus make me your servant  
To carry your cross and to share  
all your burdens and cares.*

I was neither joyful nor willing to make such a sacrifice.

In hospital, where the shifts are seismic between being vulnerable and feeling secure, between suffering loss and being heaped with mercy, I sensed another shift in myself. Yes, I am more open now to joining the hymn writer's expression of self-offering.

There were other shifts. I have lived with a child inside me that persists in mistrusting God: "God doesn't wish me well. God is mean like an angry parent." Now the child in me must give way as the adult self takes in the many ways God has come to me in compassion and healing.

The two shifts go together: I find that as I am more willing to let myself go and offer myself to God, I am able to trust more. I wonder at the process of being shaped into a child of God—slow, tortuous, uncomfortable, like giving birth. What a foolish child I have been! I have much to sing about, in the words of the Taizé song:

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful  
In the Lord I will rejoice  
Look to God, do not be afraid  
Lift up your voice, the Lord is near. ■*

Joyce Gladwell lives in Elmira, Ont.



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# Celebrating the Presbyterian Family

MEANS SHARING OUR STORIES. BY HARVEY SELF

*O sing to the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.—Psalm 96:1*

If I have become convinced of one thing in 28 years of ministry it is that every person has a story to tell and that it is our stories that make us who we are. They are stories, distinct and different, yet connecting us to one another under the banner of the name of the Father in whom every family, in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 3), is named. We are all formed by the circumstances we encounter, by the choices that we make, by the choices others make for us and by our responses to those choices. And whether or not we realize it, all of those pieces of the puzzle that make up “our story” are fashioned into a whole picture by the hand of the God of grace. In a world in which our diversity so easily gives way to our disharmony, and in a world where we spend so much more time and energy on what divides us than on what unites us, we need more than anything to hear each other’s stories of life within the family of our One God. I believe we can best do that by sharing our stories. Not arguing about our differing theological perspectives or our differing religious rituals but sharing our common encounters with the Holy, the God of Amazing Grace, the God and Father of us all.

Over the last 10 years I have been privileged to serve on an arm of our church that deals every day with the

diversity within our Presbyterian family, that being Canada Ministries of the Life and Mission Agency. Canada Ministries offers aid and encouragement to new church developments in the Gaelic Highlands of Cape Breton as well as to a ministry to Arabic-speaking new Canadians in Mississauga, Ont., called Almanarah. It reaches into the inner cities of Canada to touch those living in boarding houses in Toronto and to peoples of our First Nations through healing circles in Vancouver. All these diverse ministries with the Presbyterian Church have their own stories to tell; stories that tell of the gracious hand of God molding and making them into what we are today. We need to hear those diverse stories to be enlivened and energized by the amazing truth that God is in our midst doing an amazing thing. “He is not in the tomb! He is risen!” (Luke 24:6)

I am enjoying this year as Moderator and the chance it gives to hear these stories from across our church and the chance to pass them along in turn. I am valuing the chance to model, in the most sincere spirit of humility, a gift God has given to me, that is the gift of listening. Our world does not need more critics who set out to tear down the thoughts of others, or more combatants who set out to crush those whom they encounter, or more egomaniacs who consider only their opinions to be worthy of consideration. We need listeners and



we need them desperately! We need listeners who can hear the stories of these fellow Presbyterians who came to our country in times of highland clearances in Scotland and realize that they can share stories of grace with those Presbyterians who have found a new home in Canada, free from the persecution and hardships they knew in Egypt or China. We need listeners who can appreciate that the enthusiastic worship of Presbyterians in Malawi is just as pleasing to God as is the quiet solemnity in any one of a hundred rural Presbyterian congregations in Southwestern Ontario or Manitoba. We need listeners who can hear the sound of the Spirit wherever and whenever he makes his presence felt. We need listeners who can appreciate that the Presbyterian family is made up of all these stories which come together, becoming the one story of the family of God’s people under our One Heavenly Father. May this be the story we share together, in this month of the family, to the praise of glory of Him who lovingly calls us His own. ■

*Blessings,*



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca)



## Jubilee, Stayner, Ont.

Don McNabb served as clerk of session at Jubilee, Stayner, for 37 years. His replacement, Ellen Craig thanked him for a job well done. Behind them is Rev. Darren May. Photo by John Hindle



## First, Chatham, Ont.

First, Chatham, celebrated its 175th anniversary last October. Dr. Leighton Ford, of Leighton Ford Ministries, was the guest speaker. He's seen with Rev. Mike Maroney cutting the anniversary cake. Ford was born and raised in Chatham and attended First as a boy.



## Eastminster, Edmonton

Pat Binnie, Decima Baker and Joyce

Beaton experienced quite a day one Sunday in September: a piper, then a wonderful soloist, a great buffet, and many friends, some of whom they hadn't seen in a while. All this in celebration of the 50th anniversary at Eastminster, Edmonton. And they had cake! Joyce, by the way, is the only charter member at Eastminster.





### St. Columba, Saint John, N.B.

Joan Kennedy and John Hawkins were honoured last November for their many years as elders of St. Columba, Saint John. The occasion was the 114th anniversary of the congregation and the 40th anniversary in the present building. Rev. Dr. Paul Brown, session member, presented plaques to the two retired elders who, after the service, were called upon to cut the anniversary cake. Retired minister, Rev. Dr. Steven Cho, has been acting minister of the congregation for more than four years.



### Presbytery of Brampton, Ont.

The youth society at St. Mark's, Malton, Ont., hosted the first Presbytery of Brampton youth worship service last September. Rev. Harvey Self, Moderator of the 135th General Assembly, was the guest speaker on the theme of "Growing in God's Love." Music was provided by Knox, Oakville. Members of the society and the adult advisors to the youth group are pictured following the service with Self (back row, just left of centre) and Jeffrey Crawford, synod youth ministry consultant (back row, right). Photo by Alex Luyckx

### online extra

**ALSO ON OUR WEBSITE:** Rev. Yeon Wha Kim was welcomed into the pastoral charge of First, Thunder Bay, Ont., in September.

**PLEASE VISIT THE MONTHLY PNP PAGE AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA) FOR MORE.**

### Kingston, Ont.

Sand Hill, Kingston, Ont., has a new sign. It's down the road, on Anne and Gaten Levac's property, next to Highway 15, north of town, pointing towards the church. Elder Mike Mundell and board of managers member Ron Smith were blessed with the undertaking.





# Market Place

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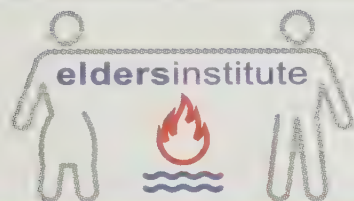
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T6J 5H1; 780-756-6320; jebryden@shaw.ca. Sherwood Park, Alta., Sherwood Park; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf, c/o Dayspring Presbyterian Church, 11445 40 Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 0R4; 780-293-0618; dpcprev@telus.net.

## Obituaries

**BRETT, REV. GORDON W. C., B.A., M.Div.,** aged 92 died in Elliot Lake, Ont., on Dec. 3, 2009. Graduating from Knox College in 1947, he served six pastorates during 30 years of ministry: Tabusintac, New Jersey, and Oak Point, N.B.; MacDonald's Corners, Elphin and Snow Road; Oakridge, London; Knox, Oshawa; Calvin and Oliver Road, Thunder Bay; Knox, Grand Valley. He also served as clerk of three presbyteries.

Rev. Brett is survived by Hilda (nee Wahlberg) his wife of 63 years; children Mark, Linda and Elizabeth and grandchildren Max, Noel, Erika and Brett.

**BROWN-EWING, REV. DR. LINDA,** Sept. 9, 1952 to April 2009. Linda Brown-Ewing began her earthly life's journey in Kitchener, Ont., and ended that journey in Calgary. Linda was accompanied in the last 25 years by her loving husband, Lloyd Ewing. She was ordained into the service of the Lord in 1979 and received her doctor of ministry degree in 1993. During her ministry she served the congregations of St. Andrew's, Heart Lake, Ont., Knox's Galt, Ont., and Centennial, Calgary. She also spent time as an area consultant for the Women's Missionary Society in Ontario.

**LAYLOR, ELFREDA L.,** aged 70, passed away July 19, 2009 after a courageous battle with cancer. A faithful member and a dedicated elder, clerk of session, Sunday school teacher and Caribbean Night organizer at St. Mark's, Malton, Ont. A kind, caring lady of deep faith. ■

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If February had a nickname, it might be "shorty" or "tiny" because it's the shortest month of the year. But it is action packed!

Some things you might see on a February calendar are **Groundhog Day, Valentines Day, Family Day** and **Ash Wednesday**.

Some things you might not see on the calendar but also occur in February are **Black History Month, Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras** and **Superbowl Sunday**

In the Presbyterian community, there are several very special dates on our 2010 calendar:

February 7 **PWS&D Sunday**

February 14 **Transfiguration Sunday**

February 17 **Ash Wednesday**

February 21 **1st Sunday in Lent and Heritage Sunday\***

February 28 **2nd Sunday in Lent**

**\*Heritage Sunday:** At the 135th General Assembly, the Committee on History proposed that the Presbyterian Church in Canada seek to celebrate the Presbyterian heritage that exists within its congregations. The assembly approved the motion and designated the third Sunday in February (February 21 in 2010) Heritage Sunday.

For great downloadable resources to help you, your family and your congregation celebrate Heritage Sunday, visit [presbyterian.ca/webfm\\_send/4469](http://presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/4469)



For the Journey, continued from page 50

prime minister, Haman, hatching an anti-Semitic plot that, through intrigue and deceit, Mordecai and Esther succeed in defeating. Haman ends up skewered on his own pointy gallows, which he had built for skewering Mordecai. And with Haman's exposure and execution, the Jews are given full reign to slaughter all of their enemies in the kingdom.

What are you supposed to do with a story like that? It seems like such a

when we are left wondering, where is God? The apparent absence of God is a profound experience.

And this brings us back to the book of Esther. God is not mentioned in the whole of the book. In fact, according to my computer search, it is the only book of the 66 books of the Bible where God is not named. Not even a prayer is offered in the name of God in Esther. No one says, "God is here!"

So here's the thing, here is the blessing and lesson in Purim and in the reading of Esther, at least for me. I tend to hopelessly compartmentalize life. The worst example of this is how I compartmentalize the God-present and the God-absent times, the religious and the non-religious, the holy and the horrible. God powerfully at work behind the scenes in the very secular, non-religious, at times even profane,

## The powerful implication is that God's will and power are working in concert on every page. God is behind the scene, so to speak, behind every nonreligious scene

non-religious story, some have even called it profane. I read somewhere that during the reading of Esther at Purim, Jews are supposed to boo whenever Haman's name is read and cheer whenever Esther or Mordecai's names are read. That doesn't seem right to me. And yet, the book of Esther remains in our Bibles as Holy Scripture and as Paul says to Timothy, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Besides all the side issues mentioned above, the main issue with the book of Esther is the apparent absence of God. This bothers me some, but when I reflect upon it a bit more, from the perspective of my own life, it seems to me that often God's presence is not as intriguing as His absence. Often God's voice is not as eloquent as His silence. Many times I have longed for a word from God, searched for a glimpse of His power, or yearned for the reassurance of His presence only to feel that God seems absent from the moment, distant, preoccupied, and maybe even unconcerned. I know this experience is a common faith experience. It seems like we all live just one phone call from being driven to our knees, times

God remains invisible in the book of Esther, apparently absent.

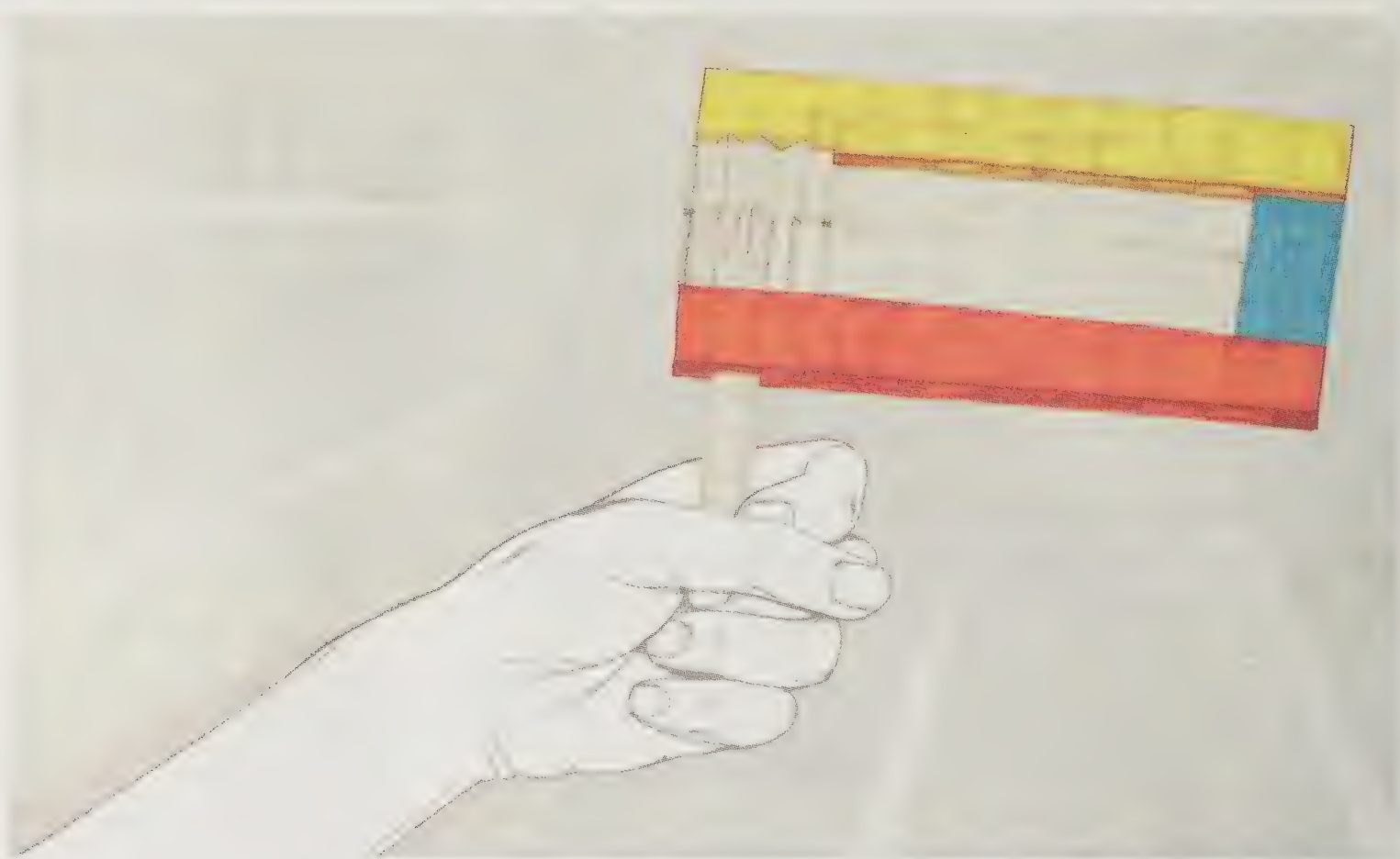
Many years ago, in 1706, the biblical scholar Matthew Henry wrote about the book of Esther: "But, though the name of God be not in it, the finger of God is, directing many minute events for the bringing about of His people's deliverance."

God definitely does not sit for someone to whip out a camera in the book of Esther. He is seemingly invisible. But the powerful implication is that God's will and power are working in concert on every page. God is behind the scenes, so to speak, behind every non-religious scene. It is perhaps the best book in the Bible to get a feel for the invisible God at work in the lives and through the lives and for the lives of God's people, people whose lives are completely engaged in the secular and at times even profane world. One day, the king of Persia, King Ahasuerus, throws a drinking bash and unbeknownst to him kicks off the events that eventually liberate the whole people of God living in exile in the Persian Empire. In the midst of these events, there is a plot to put all of the Jews in the Persian Empire to death. But God uses this very plot to destroy all their enemies and liberate the Jews instead. God is working behind the scenes, apparently absent.

tale of Esther hauls me up short on this. It challenges me to reexamine all of life, particularly the apparent God-absent parts. It challenges me to look at what appears to me as impossible circumstances where God cannot possibly be present or active, circumstances that could lead to my certain demise perhaps; to look at all of the apparent God-absent times in life through the lens of Esther and to deliberately pause and discover, or maybe rediscover, that God is God. To discover that there is no compartment of life where God is not God. And in this discovery, to stop groping into my own coffers of security, stop trying to pull strings, stop trying to manipulate people and situations, to stop all of the stuff I rush to do when I think God is not present or up to the job. The story of Esther causes me to be still and to be quiet and to be observant. This seems profound for me at a whole bunch of different levels, from trying to plumb the depths of my own Job-like experiences to the more esoteric debates of theodicy. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*





# The Lesson of Purim

GOD IS ALWAYS PRESENT, NAMED OR NOT. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

It is soon to be Purim. This means it's time for me to dust off my Old Testament and read Esther. In the Jewish Bible, the book of Esther comes as the last of the five scrolls that are read at the great festivals of the Jewish year. Its historical context is post-Babylonian exile, about the mid fifth century BC. In Esther, the story is told how Jews throughout the Achaemenid empire were saved from a subtly planned murderous anti-Semitic pogrom that reminds one of the Holocaust. This was thanks to the wisdom of a Jewish exile, Mordecai, and the courageous efforts of his cousin and stepdaughter Hadassah (Myrtle) who had become Queen Esther, wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus (probably Xerxes I). The result of this miraculous salvation is that from that time on, all Jews must celebrate their deliverance on the 14 and 15 of the month of Adar on the Jewish calendar (Esther 9:21). This is the festival of Purim and for those of us whose day-timers are not based on the lunar Jewish calendar, it takes place this year from sundown Feb. 28 to sundown March 1. A fast is usually observed the day before. (Incidentally, if you are an incorrigible fishing fanatic like me, you really ought to be basing

your life on the lunar calendar anyway. It helps with Bible study too).

The book of Esther is a fascinating story. And yet, no other book of the Hebrew Bible has received such mixed reviews, from both Jew and Christian. Some have criticized the book for what it does contain and others for what it doesn't contain. For instance, the Persian King Ahasuerus is mentioned about 190 times in the book but the God of Israel doesn't get one line. Holy Scripture is not mentioned once, not even Torah. Neither is there any mention of the basic tenants of Old Testament religion. The book of Esther has also been raked over the coals for its moral tone, or perhaps better put, the lack of one. Such basic Judaic-Christian values as kindness, mercy and forgiveness are notably lacking. Intrigue, deceit and hatred abound, regardless of whether the spotlight is on the evil protagonist Haman or on the heroes Esther and Mordecai. The book begins with an all out national drunk hosted by the good King Ahasuerus that results in an extremely anti-feminist royal decree meant to declare, "that every man should be master in his own house." (Esther 1:22) The story proceeds with Ahasuerus' continued on page 49





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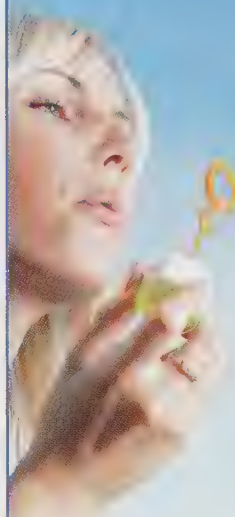
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## LIVING FAITH THEN & NOW



**On the Cover:**  
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# Populist Thuggery

DESPITE THE FACTS, THE FEDS CONTINUE THEIR "TOUGH ON CRIME" POLICY. BY DAVID HARRIS



The headline in one of my community newspapers said it all: Low Murder Rate [an] Anomaly: Cops. It was a classic case of not letting facts get in the way of a good story.

My local police chief wanted to assure us that just because we've only had three murders since 2008, it's bound to get worse. And so the deployment of some homicide officers to the traffic division is, he promised, only temporary.

The boring facts are that in Ontario, where I live, there were 176 homicides in 2008. That same year, nearly twice as many people (320) were killed on the province's highways.

But here's the bit that seems to have eluded my local chief. A year before, 451 people died on Ontario's highways. The nearly 30 per cent reduction in deaths was due in great measure to enhanced highway policing: more officers doing a better job.

I don't know the precise reasons that my regional top cop is worried that there are so few murders, but it certainly goes along with the current federal government's obsession with crime and punishment issues.

The Prime Minister has made being "tough on crime" a major party platform. And it's one of the Tories' defences for proroguing Parliament, so Conservatives could be appointed to the Senate where the Liberal-dominated chamber has been allegedly soft on crime and delaying legislation from the Commons.

Lest you be concerned that I have the Tories in my sights, let me assure you that I find the opposition equally culpable for their complete inability to challenge the government's manufactured fear with some simple facts.

To wit: In 2006, the most recent year for statistics I could find, the crime rate was the lowest in 25 years, and it's been in general decline since 1991. Not only is the crime rate falling, the crime severity rate is also falling. Homicides constitute a fraction of a per cent of all crime while nearly half of all crimes in Canada are property related.

Only about 20 per cent of all reported crimes are violent, and fewer than one per cent of those are homicides.

About a quarter of all police-reported crimes involve family violence. Half of those are committed by spouses or common-law partners.

You see a picture here. Canada is becoming a safer place to live by the year. Fewer and fewer people are committing crimes. So why does the federal government want to put more people in jail for longer periods of time?

Why, when research shows that the chances of a person recommitting a crime are hugely reduced by rehabilitation and restoration to society does the government want to spend huge amounts of our taxes to build more prisons and incarcerate people at the cost of about \$80,000 a year per inmate?

Canada already has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. The folly of which is demonstrated by

looking south where the United States, with the highest incarceration rate in the West, has a higher crime rate than Canada.

Plain and simple: Jail doesn't work.

But it gets worse. A recent international Angus Reid poll suggests that Canadians are buying this tough on crime nonsense. It found that 62 per cent of Canadians favoured the death penalty for murder. The figure was 67 per cent in Britain and 84 per cent in the U.S.

Where is this fear coming from? We know that harsher punishment does not deter most would-be criminals. And we know that restorative justice has a far more positive impact on convicts than retributive justice.

It's pretty clear where Jesus stood. (Not that Christians haven't used tortured logic to ignore his words for centuries.) If his message about a God of mercy and love and restoring the sinner isn't enough, there's always Matthew 5:38, 39: "You have heard it said: 'And eye for an eye ... but I say to you ... turn the other cheek.'"

Put it another way. God made a promise to Noah that he wouldn't get tough on sinners anymore. If God can be soft, so can we.

Christians in Canada clearly have their work cut out if they want to overcome increasing political and populist thuggery. ■

David Harris



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## Let's Have An Agape

*Re Responding to Webber, January*

Our new form of the old Sacramentarian controversy must not become divisive. If our polity can accommodate Presbyterian bishops, lay moderators, deaconesses and erstwhile catechists, we should acknowledge the need to appoint suitable laity to celebrate the sacraments.

Some years ago I was responsible for worship services for Anglican and United Church students. The former did not want a eucharist, the latter did. My colleague solved the dilemma: let's have an *agape* (the "love-feast" shared in a house church)—the Anglicans know it isn't a sacrament and the others think it is. So both were happy.

I've studied sacramental theology for a lifetime, and had two "high church" teachers, David Hay at Knox College, Toronto, and Tom Torrance in Edinburgh. But I prefer Karl Barth's simpler take on the New Testament, "I have had to abandon the 'sacramental' understanding of baptism." So also with the Lord's Supper—less a traditional "sacrament" but more than a sign. This relates to the view of ministry as less priestly and more prophetic. Is not a Presbyterian minister essentially a teaching elder, a congregational rabbi? Sacraments are visible words, a form of proclamation, as scripture is the written word and preaching the oral. The simple New Testament rite developed into the Roman baroque ritual, causing much grief to our 16th-century reformers as to how much ceremony to retain. Their responses ranged from one extreme to the other, but the Zurich-Geneva axis (Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin) settled for a simple rite not necessarily tied to the ordained priest.

After all, the very definition of sacrament ("visible sign of invisible grace") is too broad, the practice wildly various, the biblical warrant silent as to

who may preside—maybe we should settle for an *agape*; it seems closest to the New Testament practice.

JOSEPH C. MCLELLAND, POINTE-CLAIRE, QUE.

## WWJRead?

After considerable thought, and with trepidation, I am writing my first letter ever to the editor of the *Record*. I feel somewhat out of place in this company as I am not as learned or eloquent as the other letter writers are.

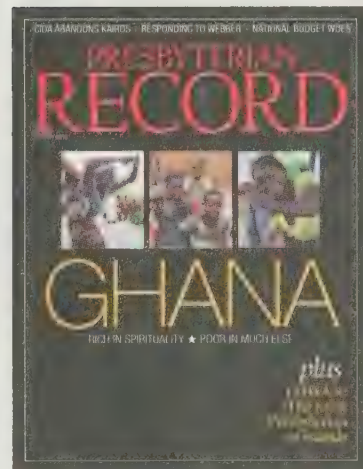
Does Jesus read the *Presbyterian Record*?

This question occurred to me after reading the December issue. I could not help but wonder what Jesus' reaction would be if he read what his followers were doing. Jesus left us with instruction to bring good news to the poor, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to prepare for the kingdom of God. Although many of his followers have done that, it seems that today the need to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to bring good news to the poor, is still as great, if not greater, than 2,000 years ago.

In the Letters section I noticed that writer-A had replied to something ➤

write to us

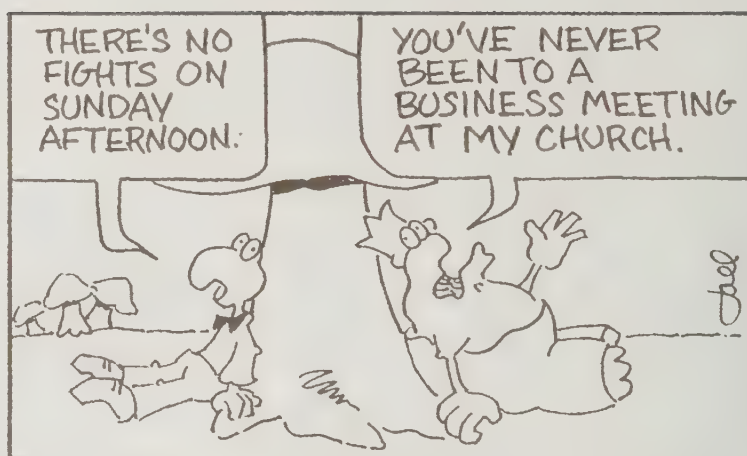
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## Pontius' Puddle



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that writer-B had said, and writer-C found this depressing. Writer-A now apologizes to writer-C for causing him to be depressed. Something about universalism. Another letter writer wants to know if the substitutionary theory has any bearing on present reality.

I read one of the feature articles; no easy job. Things like "the characteristic of the preaching event," "participates in an incarnational event," or "making a sermon an incarnational creature of grace," tend to slow me down. I agree with the article author that it may

sometimes seem difficult to believe that God Himself is present in human preaching. So true! Not just difficult to believe, impossible to believe! I think I may have heard close to 4,000 sermons and some were so full of the preacher's own importance, wit, cleverness, rhetoric, drama, that there just was no room for God.

Then I came to the Features section, where I read about ignoring the subtlety of Trinitarian doctrine, about Jesus' being truly divine, but not wholly divine, about unfleshed and enfleshed, incarnate and discarnate.

Would Jesus know what these authors are talking about? Would he care? And if he is not confused yet, he certainly will be after reading two articles about the use of the people's money. In the first article (Building Churches) he reads that "the relationship the parishioners have with their buildings is the most important." In the second article (A House Not Made With Hands) he reads that "God has specifically commanded us to assist the poor, but He never told Christians to build even a small chapel, let alone spend money on one instead of them."

Not much has changed in 2,000 years. There are still people who do and people who say. I believe there are many more people who do than one would think from reading the *Record*. I believe that those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked deserve a much more prominent place in the *Record*, than do the scholars and their debates. I also believe that it would make the *Record* easier and more enjoyable to read, and that it would give a truer picture of the church. Imagine Jesus reading the *Presbyterian Record*!

ADRIAN C. VAN DRAANEN, RICHMOND, ONT.



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### Confused Online

I feel slightly schizophrenic after spending some time trying to find my way around online. No doubt, the style



and present set up is now dictated to some degree by the arrangement of the archival material but that system seems to lend a kind of distortion to the reporting. With the former format, it was much easier to know what each issue contained. Now confusion reigns and one is no longer sure where one month ends and another begins; or even where to find the original article, pictures, etc., especially if the reader wishes to refer back to an item of interest.

The online setup gives a poor representation of one singular issue, giving the false impression (if the reader is not paying attention), that everything that comes up is part of the current issue. That could make for a hefty issue. Worse still, everything thrown together as it suggests somehow a distinct lack of organization. I don't think it will sell many subscriptions to the *Record*.

I gather there are a few "bugs" to work out!

WANDA THOMPSON, GUELPH, ONT.

**Editor Responds:** *You're right. Reorganizing the archival material for the past five years is a massive task; but the work has begun.*

### Thank You for Submitting

On behalf of myself and St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont., we wish to thank you so kindly for including the picture of one of our members receiving a cheque from the Sunday school kids in January. Also, to our surprise, was the article I wrote for the Most Beautiful Church Contest appearing in full colour on the inside back cover. I received a number of favourable comments not only on the article but on the placement of the article and pictures. I explained I had nothing to do with the location and therefore again want to thank you for your efforts on behalf of St. Paul's.

LEIGHTON A. PEACH, SIMCOE, ONT.

### Knox Centred

*Re Centre Road, January*

The church referred to is actually Knox and is located on Centre Road—the highway separating East Williams and West Williams townships. Growing up in that church, and still attending on my visits from Nova Scotia, we did and still do refer to it as Centre Road Church. The other churches in the charge were also referred to by location, rather than by their official names.

CLARK WISEMAN, DUTCH SETTLEMENT, N.S. ➤

## 166<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCAATION KNOX COLLEGE

Join us at Convocation Hall on Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.  
Convocation Address by

**Dr. Don Posterski**  
**"Sustainable Faith in Fragile Times"**

A Pre-Convocation Workshop led by Dr. Posterski will also be held from  
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Principal's Reunion Year Dinner: Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**  
For Knox/Ewart Grads of 1970, 1960, 1950 and prior

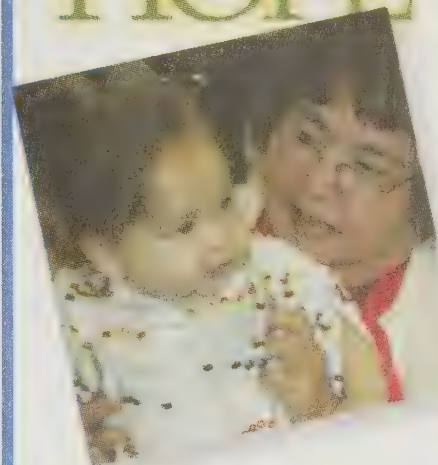
**KEGA Grad Luncheon: Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**  
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## BUILDING HOPE



**A**lexia and Gramma Ruth attend Anishinabe Presbyterian Fellowship.

This was the day of Alexia's baptism. Sixty to eighty people attend church every Sunday at 3:30 p.m. at Anishinabe Place of Hope.

Half of that number are children from infant to 17 years old. At Winnipeg Inner City Missions both Christian and Aboriginal Traditional Spiritual practices are combined in the context of Worship.



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Evangel Hall Mission

## Volunteers Needed for Sunday Dinners

This summer Evangel Hall  
Mission needs your help.

We are looking for willing groups of 6 to 12 volunteers to provide home cooked meals and serve approximately 75 to 100 people. Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. and volunteer groups are invited to create their own menus. The meal does not have to be complicated, Sheppard's pie and lasagna are quite popular, and if cooking is not your forte, we have two large barbecues available for hot dogs and hamburgers. Meals can be prepared off site in the comfort of your own kitchen or here at the Hall, whichever is more convenient for you.

Evangel Hall Mission represents extended family for many of our participants. The Sunday dinners Program is not only an opportunity to provide hot nutritious meals for members of our community less fortunate than ourselves but also a chance to let others know that they are appreciated and cared for.

For more information on this program or to have your group host a Sunday dinner, please contact Paula Aceto:  
(416) 504-3563 x 231

"Everybody can be great.  
Because anybody can serve...  
You only need a heart full of grace.  
A soul generated by love."  
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## FRONT Letters

### No Politics in Record, Please

*Re For the Record, January*

I know our religion may call us to political action, but I also find playing the political game not appropriate for the *Presbyterian Record*. Why was the funding to CIDA not given? We don't know because the minister's office did not clarify. If from that point on, Mr. Harris continued with an appeal for readers to contact their elected officials to protest, I'd not object one bit.

But I do object that Harris indulges in political speculation of anti-Semitism and also shows disrespect for our elected officials in describing the Prime Minister's Office as "command-and-control."

I am a civil servant and I can attest to the fact that political decisions are the object of intense speculation, but in the end we common mortals will never know the answer.

Speculating that the decision not to continue the funding for Kairos has something to do with anti-Semitism is a serious charge to make, hardly justified by an "oblique" statement by John Baird. Let's not enter into the battle zone or the paranoia of being sufficiently not anti-Semitic. Let's just make sure we aren't, then we don't have to prove our innocence even when we weren't really accused of being anti-Semitic.

This brings to mind Hamlet: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

NANCY LEASE, QUEBEC

### Verb Takes an Object

*Re For the Journey, January*

This article was of particular interest to me as I too experienced the July cold when I visited my son in Dunedin, New Zealand, several years ago. However, I was startled by the serious grammar error. It is wrong to write, "left Linda and I feeling." A verb takes an object; therefore "me" is correct. Try taking away the word "Linda" and the mistake becomes obvious.

DIANA ALLAN, TORONTO



"Relative Cold" by David Webber, January issue

### Our Apologies

To Rev. Dr. Richard Topping. In January we reported that he "took issue with biblical interpretation" in his talk on Calvin. Absurd, of course. As professor of studies in the Reformed tradition at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver, Topping spoke about his concerns over some contemporary ways of approaching the interpretation of scripture—indeed he was arguing for a certain way of doing it.

### On our website

The conversation continues online, including a meditation on the suffering in Haiti. ■

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# Passive Activism

SIT BACK, SIP A DRINK, SING AN ANTHEM, TEXT A DONATION. **BY ANDREW FAIZ**



It was quite a night of television in mid-January with two Haiti fundraisers. The second of these was from the States, featuring international—mostly American—artists. Bruce Springsteen sang *We Shall Overcome*, Stevie Wonder did *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*; Jennifer Hudson *Let It Be*; Kid Rock, Sheryl Crow and Keith Urban combined on *Lean On Me*; Justin Timberlake brought *Hallelujah*. I began to feel as if I was at some camp sing-song.

By the time, near the end, Haitian Emeline Michel sang *Many Rivers to Cross*, this feeling of being trapped inside a rally was overwhelming. These are the popular hymns of the past quarter century. They've sold cars and perfume, they can evoke lost loves and mark epiphanous moments—they are instant nostalgia.

Lest you think I'm being cynical or sarcastic—I am, but only a little. Each of these songs is a shortcut; an icon of something important. Dependent on your age or experience, they also suggest a cause or a struggle. Sing *We Shall Overcome*, and you are in Birmingham again, whether you've ever been there or not, locked in the civil rights struggle.

Sung for the victims of the Haiti earthquake by sincere-seeming celebs, the songs were both highly manufactured manipulation and caring hopefulness. Their power swung both ways.

Add to this list a new anthem which was heard on the Canadian broadcast: K'Naan's *Wavin' Flag*. Here's the chorus:

*When I get older, I will be stronger,  
They'll call me freedom,  
Just like a wavin' flag ...*

K'Naan is a Somali Canadian who mixes a wide variety of world genres to create a unique sound which is equally

appealing to old hippies, perpetual rockers and hip-hoppers. *Wavin' Flag* is about as sing-songy as you can get. It has that same quality to bore into your guts and make you feel that just by singing it you're making some difference in the world. (If you know the song, I'm guessing you're already singing it in your head.)

However, it wasn't till the next morning when I went to buy it on iTunes I learned it was a theme song for the FiFa World Cup. Well, of course—this is the way of now. The line is blurry between activism and corporatism. Soccer-Portal.org reports this: "K'Naan has spoken about the 'unity and celebration' that will connect with his song *Wavin' Flag* ... The remix ... is part of Coca-Cola's global integrated marketing campaign 'inspired by the joyous dance celebrations familiar to Africa.' The track will be used as the music element throughout the entire campaign, including as the soundtrack for all television commercials, during the trophy tour."

Why can't it sell Coke, and soccer, and pledges for victims?

We live in a media culture. Corporate, celebrity driven and sincere. An awful thing happened in Haiti and there were thousands of cameras there; we sipped on drinks in our living rooms, texting donations from our

cellphones. We care, we really sincerely care, as long as cameras, corporations and celebrities tell us to care.

This is known as passive activism. And it's good; sort of, mostly. Haitians don't need us trudging through their cities trying to be helpful. There are plenty of talented and skilled folks who can be so. What we need to do is pay for it. And we do: both the Canadian and American telethons raised millions of dollars. This is good.

It's passive, it's manipulative, it's corporatized, it's celebrity driven, it works. It raises money, little bits from a lot of people.

And I so want to be cynical about it—but I'm not. Not really. Not when the strains of *Lean On Me* play through my head. I am sucked into the endless associations I have with that song.

Something, however, began to nag at me through the interminable self-satisfied chatter of the Canadian broadcast. I suddenly felt sorry for the victims of the next natural disaster. After the open-hearted outpouring of support for victims of the South Asian tsunami, aid agencies noted a care-fatigue towards following disasters.

There are other corners of the planet where other horrible things are happening and we'll care about them as well—they'll call us freedom, just like a waving flag—if only somebody would organize a really great concert that makes us feel sincere.

And if the celebs aren't there, singing our favourite anthems, neither are we. We have allowed ourselves to be corporatized; to wait for the signals to care. And these awesome anthems are often lies we like to tell ourselves. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



## PWS&D Support 'Overwhelming'

Presbyterians respond to appeal with \$2.67 million in donations. BY CONNIE PURVIS

THE CHURCH'S RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT agency was "drowning in generosity" by the end of 2009, reporting a total of \$2.67 million despite fears that it could fall short of its budget by almost half a million dollars.

Presbyterian World Service and Development launched an appeal for funds in mid-September when donations at the end of the third quarter were down 45 per cent compared to previous years. Although the agency typically receives the lion's share of its support in the final quarter, staff projected the steep shortfall if the trend continued.

Donations flooded in, generating almost \$2.67 million—57 per cent of the total year's revenue—in only four months and surpassing the \$1.5

million needed to meet commitments to partner organizations.

"I feel like I'm just drowning in generosity," said a jubilant Colleen McCue, head of PWS&D's finances. "I've worked here for nine years, and looking back I've realized that every time—every single time—we've put out an appeal people have come through for us."

"The PWS&D staff and committee are so committed to their mission and committed to the church, and they believe the church is really behind them and supportive of what they're doing," said Rev. Dr. Art Van Seters, convener of the PWS&D committee. He suggested the staff took a risk when they launched their appeal last fall, but they chose to "tell the story straight" and trust fellow

Presbyterians to chip in.

"It says a lot about our church. Our church really does have a larger vision, and PWS&D is a major part of that vision. And at a time when both society and the church are facing a real challenge; when people could say, 'we'll look after the congregation and leave this off.' But for many people PWS&D isn't an option."

### Haiti Update

At press time, PWS&D's phones were ringing off the hook as support poured in for earthquake-stricken Haiti. As of Feb. 8, donations for Haiti relief totaled more than \$600,000.

Individual donations received before Feb. 12 were matched by the Canadian government. ■

## Presbyterians Sharing Totals \$8.47 million

Higher than forecast, lower than budgeted. BY CONNIE PURVIS

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CHURCH'S national mission and ministry fund came to just over \$8.47 million in 2009, falling \$128,000 short of the year's \$8.6-million budget.

The final numbers were higher than November forecasts, however, which suggested Presbyterians Sharing would barely surpass \$8.4 million by the end of the year.

Total contributions to the fund have fluctuated between \$8.58 and \$8.76 million over the past decade, with the highest point in 2006. Donations dropped by almost \$150,000 in 2008 and again by \$113,000 in 2009, bringing the yearly totals to levels last seen in the late 1990s.

But Karen Plater, associate secretary of stewardship, remains optimistic about the 2009 contributions, suggesting the declines are signs of

struggling congregations and do not indicate a lack of willingness to give.

"I have been amazed each year, as I talk to congregations about their final contributions and watch the cheques come in, at the generosity of Presbyterians from across Canada," she wrote in a January email to national office staff. "This is only 1.3 per cent less than the \$8.58 million contributed last year, representing a significant effort from congregations at a time of economic downturn and increasing demands on the resources of congregations."

Churches usually approve their allocation at their annual meetings.

Presbyterians Sharing funds most of the church's national programs and ministries, including the work of the Life and Mission Agency, General Assembly and the church's three theological colleges. ■

### Record Support Strong Donations up 16 per cent.

THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD received a huge boost at the end of 2009 as readers donated over \$132,000 to the church magazine, topping 2008's total of \$111,000 by 16 per cent.

"I'm humbled and overwhelmed by the extraordinary support from *Record* readers," said David Harris, editor. He noted the campaign's success would allow the magazine to unfurl some long overdue marketing strategies; these are designed to appeal to Presbyterians who are not currently subscribers and to make the Every Home Plan more attractive for congregations.

"Our new circulation software allows us to take over all administration for Every Home Plan congregations and to bill subscribers directly," he said.

The October appeal was the most successful since the annual campaign launched five years ago. ■ —C. Purvis



# Community News Briefs

## St. James Town Coalition Steps Up

RESIDENTS IN ONE of Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods were offered new hope on Jan. 19 as four churches and three non-profit groups forged a coalition to "cross all barriers and embrace all who call St. James Town home."

St. James Town, which lies north-east of Toronto's downtown core, is

one of the most densely populated communities in Canada, with about 17,000 people living in 19 apartment towers—a staggering population density of more than 64,000 people per square kilometre. It is also among the city's poorest neighbourhoods and is home



Signatories: Kevin Moore (Mennonite Brethren), Clayton Rowe (City Hope), Mark McElwain (Presbyterian), Rev. Karen Bach (Yonge Street Mission), Gene Lara (St. James Town Safety Committee), Elizabeth Mowat (United), and Rev. Canon Dr. David Barker (Anglican).

primarily to recent immigrants.

On Jan. 19, representatives from the churches and organizations signed a document expressing their formal commitment to offer "whatever resources the community needs based on our ability to provide." The signing coincided with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which ran from Jan. 18 to 25. A fifth church, which was unable to get approval to sign the document, hopes to do so in the future.

For four years, the members of the ecumenical coalition have been working side-by-side on several separate and joint programs including an after-school program run in partnership with three churches, including Rosedale Presbyterian, and two non-profit groups.

The St. James Town ecumenical coalition includes Rosedale Presbyterian, St. Simon's Anglican, 614 St. James Town Mennonite Brethren, St. Andrew's United, City Hope, the St. James Town Safety Committee, and Yonge Street Mission.—C.Purvis



## Wrapped in God's Love

Prayer shawls bring caring and comfort to those in need. BY KATE WATSON

THE MONTHLY meeting of the prayer shawl group of St. Andrew's in Dartmouth, N.S., is a joyful combination of prayer, business, refreshment, conversation and knitting.

The group, which is composed of 16 active members and 11 supportive knitters, provides shawls to people in need of encouragement and comfort. In four years, 262 shawls have been distributed to places such as Holland, Korea and Scotland. There are shawls from St. Andrew's in every province and in most of the United States.

Christine McDonald proposed the idea in 2005 after learning about a prayer shawl ministry at Kildonan, Winnipeg.

The knitters, who range from their 30s to their 80s, knit on their own time and during monthly meetings held over tea and treats in members' homes.

Children are given specially-made smaller shawls along with knitted stuffed animals. Catherine Picco, the group's coordinator, believes the ministry benefits both the people who participate in the group and those who receive the shawls.

"It's a good feeling to know you are sharing God's love with others through knitting," she said. "And the people who receive them know they are being thought about, prayed for and that they are not alone. God is present in their lives."

## Life and Mission Agency Staff Shifts

NUMEROUS STAFF at the church's national offices finished their contracts or shifted gears in January.

- Joro Lee completed his second one-year contract with Communications and enrolled in teacher's college.
- Reuben St. Louis, part-time coordinator of the Youth in Mission program, resigned after five years of service ➤



to continue full-time studies at Knox College, Toronto.

- Barbara Treviranus will take on the YIM portion of the mission education portfolio for six months. Treviranus also works part-time for Presbyterian World Service and Development as refugee sponsorship coordinator.

- Lindsay Hepburn-Aley, Education for Mission's mission interpretation coordinator has moved from working full-time to part-time as she pursues postgraduate studies. Some duties previously performed by the mission coordinator will now be the responsibility of Margaret Zondo, International Ministries administrator.

—C.Purvis

### Presbyterian Chaplain Appointed 'Commander'

BRIGADIER GENERAL David Kettle has been appointed to the highest level in the Order of Military Merit, making him one of only a handful of chaplains

to become members.

"I was surprised, overjoyed, and honoured to be receiving the C.M.M.," he told the *Record*. "It is seldom granted to brigadier generals and has only been awarded to one other chaplain general."

The Presbyterian padre and head of chaplaincy for the Canadian Armed Forces was among six officers appointed to the level of Commander, the highest of the Order's three levels of membership. Commanders may use the post-nominal initials C.M.M.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean announced the appointments Jan. 21. Insignia will be presented at an investiture ceremony to be held later this year, but the appointments have been in effect since late November.

Kettle's C.C.M. is in recognition of outstanding service and leadership in duties of great responsibility—in particular the strategic leadership he has provided to the chaplaincy branch.

He says his strategy centres on three areas: ensuring the chaplaincy branch focuses on "21st-century operations" like the conflict in Afghanistan or emergency efforts in Haiti; that it provides ongoing training through chaplaincy, postgraduate and professional development programs; and that it is a vocation of choice for clergy and religious leaders.

He also handled religious support in 2000 when the remains of an unknown soldier from Vimy Ridge was repatriated and added to the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

"I am well known and trusted by the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces," he noted. "Over a career of nearly 30 years, I have gained the trust of many serving at the general and flag officer rank."

The Order of Military Merit was created in 1972 to recognize service and devotion to duty by members of the Canadian Armed Forces. ■ —C.Purvis

## The Story Behind ... a Christmas Picture

THE *RECORD'S* annual Christmas art contest is a much-loved and anticipated event among readers and *Record* staff. This past December, a submission by 12-year-old Austin Bear was a thrill for the artist as well as the small church he attends. Calvin-Goforth in Saskatoon has no minister and only a few pews full of people at Sunday worship. Still, the congregation makes up for its size with warmth and welcoming.

"We were absolutely thrilled to have Austin's art work displayed in the *Presbyterian Record*," said clerk of session, Georgina Bone. "Austin will benefit immensely from this positive experience."

Bear's parents struggle with addictions and are therefore not part of his life. However, two sisters in their 20s—who have known Bear since he was a toddler—have taken him into their home and act as his guardians. One of these women, Faith Villeneuve, who helps out in Calvin-Goforth's children's program, brings Bear to church with her.

When asked what he was thinking when creating his masterpiece, Bear told Bone: "I started with the earth. Then I got the idea of



putting people all around the earth. I wanted to show that people should help each other. The heart was meant for peace in the world because Jesus came to bring peace. People should love each other and have peace and no wars. Then I smudged the heart and I thought I would have to start all over, but I got the idea that the love of Jesus could spread out. That's when I made the lines going out from the heart. They were to show that love spreads out and that Jesus' love will spread out all over the world. That's why I put "LOVE" at the bottom."

Bear has a flair for drama and can play the guitar; he has put both talents to good use at church.

"Austin wowed the congregation when he played with great zest a few bars of *Good King Wenceslas* on the Sunday before Christmas," said Bone. "We were very pleased that an aunt who keeps in touch with Austin came out to church specially to be there when he took part in the worship."

"Thanks again for giving us a big psychological boost and for giving a young aboriginal boy a lot of much-needed self-respect." ■ —A.M.



# Presbyterian-Penned Hymn Receives Wide Acclaim

A HYMN OF GRIEF AND HOPE for earthquake-battered Haiti became a worldwide prayer in January as it was picked up and circulated on the websites of several national churches, international church alliances and countless local church communities.

The new hymn, *In Haiti, There is Anguish* was penned by Presbyterian Church (USA) minister Rev. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette and set to the tune of *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* (#238 in the *Presbyterian Book of Praise*).

The new words were endorsed and redistributed by the U.S.A.'s National Council of the Churches of Christ, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches,

the Presbyterian Church in Canada and several other national church websites.

The author and co-pastor at Limestone Presbyterian in Wilmington, Delaware, went on a mission trip to Haiti as a college student, and has penned many hymns about issues being addressed by Church World Service and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the PC(USA)'s relief and development branch.

She gave the *Record* permission to reproduce the words and music; both are available at [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) and can be used by members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. ■

—C.Purvis

# Tens of Thousands Formally Endorse the 'Golden Rule'

"A PRINCIPLE EMBRACED by every faith, and by every moral code," better known as the Golden Rule, has formed the backbone for the Charter for Compassion—a document that has been affirmed by tens of thousands of people around the world.

It was born as the wish of former nun and religious author Karen Armstrong, who won the TED Prize in 2008. The award included US\$100,000 and help granting a "wish to change the world." Armstrong wished for help creating a charter based on the rule, which she said transcends individual religions.

The charter was compiled from the individual contributions of more than 150,000 people from over 180 countries. It was unveiled on Nov. 12, 2009.

The 310-word document calls for us to "dethrone ourselves from the centre of the world and put another there" by alleviating suffering, treating all people with compassion, respecting all religions, and rejecting any scriptural interpretation that breeds violence or hatred. More than 37,000 people have signed their names to the document.

For more information see [charterforcompassion.org](http://charterforcompassion.org). ■ —C.Purvis

# Israelis Balk at Minaret Ban

A JANUARY STUDY by a Jewish foundation suggests few Israelis would support a ban on the construction of minarets on mosques—a plan that came to pass in Switzerland last year when 57.7 per cent of voters unexpectedly banned new minarets in a national referendum.

According to a telephone survey sponsored by the New York-based Foundation for Ethic Understanding, 43 per cent of Jewish Israelis would oppose a similar ban on the construction of minarets in Israel, 28 per cent would support such a ban and 29 were undecided. The research was based on a survey of 500 people in Israel.

The Switzerland minaret ban was spearheaded by the right-wing Swiss People's Party, which argued the towers used to call Muslims to prayer were symbols of political power and not theological requirements in Islam. The country's four existing mosques are unaffected by the ban. ■ —C.Purvis



## Caribbean Churches Call for Co-Operation in Haiti

AS AID AND RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS poured into the devastated regions of Haiti, the Caribbean Conference of Churches applauded the "heroic efforts of all concerned," but also urged the international community to look beyond emergency response toward "genuine development co-operation."

"Without such a thrust, we shall continue—for decades to come—addressing symptoms and not root causes of a deep-seated social malady," wrote General Secretary Gerard Granado in a statement sent to member churches and ecumenical partners. He suggested the earthquake was merely a catalyst; the widespread devastation was caused by decades of poverty leading to "an overcrowded city with weak and compromised structures" that was easily leveled when a 7.0 earthquake struck on Jan. 12.

The conference represents 33 denominations and regional groups including a handful of national Presbyterian churches in 34 territories across the region. ■ —C.Purvis



# Colleges Urge Assembly Council to Reverse Decision

Heads of Presbyterian colleges ask for 10.13 per cent of Presbyterians Sharing revenue.

BY J. DORCAS GORDON, STEPHEN FARRIS AND JOHN VISSERS

AMONG THE SPECIFIC measures approved by the Assembly Council in November 2009 to trim the national budget was an adjustment in the grants to the colleges. Prior to this, the grants provided to the church's three theological schools (Knox College, Presbyterian College, and St. Andrew's Hall) had been calculated at 10.13 per cent of the total revenue. This was adjusted by one quarter of one percent to 9.88 per cent yielding an annual savings to the national church of approximately \$25,000.

Those of us who lead and teach in our church's theological colleges are exceedingly grateful for the funding received from the national church through Presbyterians Sharing and other revenues. We could not do what we do in educating and equipping a new generation of ministers and leaders for congregations across Canada and beyond without this significant support.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that



The Canadian Council of Presbyterian Colleges: David Jennings, convener of the St. Andrew's Hall board, Stephen Farris, principal of St. Andrew's Hall, Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox College, John Matheson, convener of the Knox board, John Vissers, principal of Presbyterian College, Ian MacDonald, convener of the Presbyterian College board.

the current economic climate and the demographic decline pose very real challenges for our church and that we must be fiscally prudent in these difficult times. We recognize and accept that the colleges should expect to share in cost-cutting measures.

That said, we do have one concern. The cuts to the grants to the colleges, while appearing modest, are indeed significant. Where many of the cost-

cutting measures undertaken by the Assembly Council in relation to the national office were temporary, the percentage cut to the colleges is permanent. For us this measure represents a double-cut since the colleges will receive a smaller wedge of a shrinking pie.

Our disappointment is that a decision of principle (to decrease the percentage funding for theological education) was made without any consultation with our boards. We also note that the Presbyterians Sharing donations received in 2009 were higher than expected; there was a drop of only 1.3 per cent compared to 2008. We would ask the Assembly Council, therefore, to reverse the decision and reinstate the 10.13 percentage.

Going forward, we would urge the church not to lose sight of the significance of a properly educated and professionally trained ministry. In the long run, the answer to a financial challenge is healthier, more vibrant churches. Healthy churches usually have gifted and well educated ministers, the kind of ministers the colleges of the church aim to produce. To that end, we are committed to working at ways that the three theological colleges can cooperate in the delivery of theological education on behalf of the church more effectively and efficiently. ■

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**The Other Six Days** BY BRADLEY CHILDS

# Finding God in the Media

## The Naked Pastor

David Hayward is the minister at Vineyard Church in Rothesay, N.B. Hayward is also an artist and comedian of sorts. Most days, this website is updated with biting cartoons and conversations David has with God through text messages and his laptop. In one of his recent texts to God, Hayward writes, "Meet you there. I should be easy to find. I'll be the one up front giving the impression that you and I are tight."

**FIND IT @** [nakedpastor.com](http://nakedpastor.com)

## The Stand

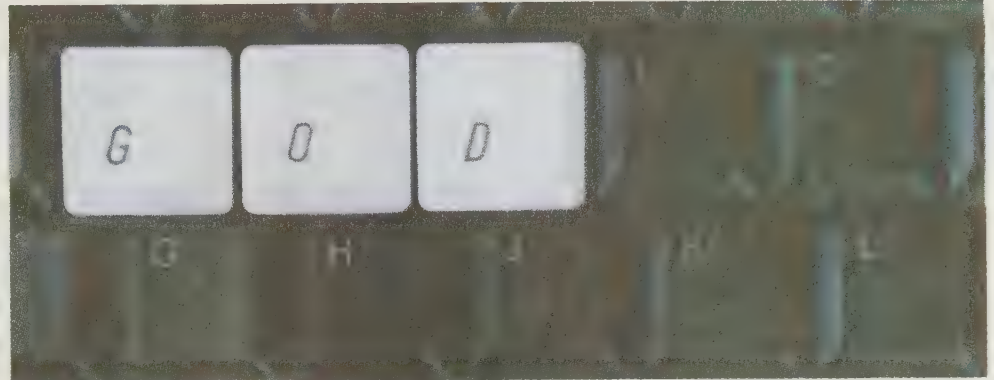
An oldie but a goody. *The Stand*, a mini-series based on the book by Stephen King, gives an interesting take on Armageddon from a distinctively Reformed perspective. Starring Gary Sinise and Rob Lowe among others, this series follows the survivors of a "superflu" as they gravitate towards the community of good or the community of evil. Along the way they are guided by dreams of a Moses figure called Mother Abigail or the Lucifer character, Randall Flagg.

**FIND IT @** Search [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) for:

*The Stand*, Rick Aviles

## Confessions of a Reformission Rev.

A regular on lists of most influential pastors, Mark Driscoll is both loved and



hated for his frank and confrontational style. In *Confessions of a Reformission Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*, Driscoll reveals the history, failures and successes of both Mars Hill Church and himself. Love him or hate him, Mark Driscoll is a leading revolutionary in what it means for a church to be missional. He is not going away anytime soon and he has a wealth of knowledge to share with his readers.

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## Quotables

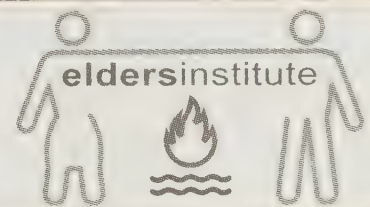
"I am against you," declares the LORD Almighty.  
"I will lift your skirts over your face.  
I will show the nations your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame.  
I will put you with filth,

I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle."

**Nahum 3:5-6** (New International Version) ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

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# A Mother Helps Mothers

Teaching nutrition in Guatemala. BY DENISE VAN WISSEN

THE FIRST PART OF THE PATH up the hill is the steepest and there isn't a lot to hold on to; some of the trees have thorns, so you've got to watch where you place your hand! My companion, Esperanza, didn't even seem to try to find handholds, she just motored on up.

After that treacherous bit, there's still a ways to go, but it's not quite as steep. I always think back to the first time I climbed this hill with a few colleagues from Presbyterian World Service and Development. It was late 2007; I was new in Guatemala and not nearly accustomed to the altitude yet, making the climb feel like the last few kilometres of a marathon.

*Unidad para el Desarrollo* (Unity for Development), with eight members, is one of the smaller groups of Mam women that I work with. Several members live close by; one has a long walk from her place farther down the hill. They're busy women because they have domestic tasks such as childcare, housework and meal preparation but they also help with agricultural work. As in many rural communities here, the men may be away for years working in the United States.

As we reach the house, we're soon greeted by *Hermana* Leona, emerging from the small kitchen building. (*Hermana*, literally "sister," is the term used by church women to address each other.) She's an enthusiastic, energetic woman, belying her 70-odd years. She and Esperanza exchange some words in Mam (one of the 23 Maya cultural groups in Guatemala), and soon the other women arrive.

It's hard to get a good look at Jorleni, Isaura's nine-month-old daughter (and Leona's granddaughter), since like all Maya babies she's kept on her mother's back, but she did look malnourished,

and her runny nose indicated a cold. Since the toddlers also looked very small for their ages, a session on healthy, appropriate weaning foods seemed like a very good idea.

Usually we would use whatever foods the women happened to have in the kitchen, but the pantry looked quite bare, and I didn't want to use foods the family was counting on for a meal. Luckily, I had decided to bring ingredients. In an effort to ensure their intact arrival, I brought eggs in a fancy supermarket carton as opposed to the usual loose-in-a-plastic-bag.

We made scrambled eggs in generous oil for extra energy, with a little onion, sweet pepper and tomato for vitamins, and tried a few other preparations. Mam mothers tend to delay introducing meat to their babies and it's not very accessible anyway, so eggs are a good nutrient-packed alternative. When we had the children try the "baby food" we'd prepared, I paid close attention to how much little Jorleni's mother fed her, in the hopes of encouraging her to



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Maria Vasquez, a Mam mother, carries her baby on her back in the traditional Maya fashion. She participates in nutrition classes led by a PCC partner in Guatemala, learning how to provide her family with healthy meals despite budget limitations.

PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY



Letter from El Salvador

# Mining and Me

El Salvador's plight induces reflection.

BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD



consider giving the baby larger portions at every meal.

I give thanks to God for my own healthy toddler, Jeremy, and for having the means to be able to feed him well, and enough education to know how to ensure his good health. It's always hard to see other children of Jeremy's age but much smaller and not as developed. That's where the hard work of organizations like the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials comes in; the more we can educate women and provide opportunities for them, the healthier their children will be.

We reviewed the main learning objectives for feeding babies, including giving them meals and snacks as frequently as possible, making sure the babies are hungry by giving them food before breast-feeding, and feeding them beans and not just the liquid they're cooked in.

Soon it was time to say our goodbyes and for me to head back through the woods and slip down the hill, thinking about the Quiché group I'd be visiting the next day.

I've worked with eight other Mam groups and 12 groups of Quiché women, doing similar classes on nutrition and health topics. The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials works in three main areas: support of women's ministry, a revolving loan program with technical assistance for both traditional handicraft projects and agricultural projects and education in health and nutrition, which is, of course, where I fit in as a nutritionist. ■

*Denise Van Wissen has been a PCC missionary in Central America for 17 years and presently works with the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials as coordinator of the health and nutrition program.*

DURING A RECENT VISIT to Central America, a Canadian consular official told me Canadians and mining are virtually one and the same; that, in fact, "mining is what we do and we do it very well."

It was a reflective moment. Despite being born a few subway stops away from the Toronto Stock Exchange, the heart of the global mining trade, mining was not a core part of my being. Was I not Canadian enough?

Over a delectable pint of Scottish cream ale, a high school buddy pondered my question of Canadian identity and stated that, "The beaver, I believe, is the perfect symbol for Canada." I bristled with excitement at the notion. Of course! The beaver is, next to humans, the animal most able to manipulate and change its environment. He continued, "Both tirelessly fell and extract natural resources and subsequently add value to them."

Eureka! The facts had been staring at me from every nickel that had passed through my hands and into my fish-bowl piggy bank.

Well, the beavers are at it again in the Cabañas department, a province in northern El Salvador. Pacific Rim, a gold mining giant based in Vancouver, has been exploring deposits in since 2002. As the company was ramping up to begin extraction from the mine, a funny thing happened: the communities said "no."

Community members and environmental groups claimed that wells were drying up after the company began drilling to estimate the quality of gold deposits. Wells found to be poisoned by unknown chemicals, leading in some cases to dead livestock, were enough for many to oppose the extraction.

While this isn't the first time a Canadian mining company has come up

against community opposition, the support inside and outside El Salvador was surely unexpected. Others—including the Conference of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church and the country's president—have joined local non-governmental organizations and citizen groups to stop Pacific Rim.

## Three environmental activists have been assassinated within the vicinity of El Dorado

Pacific Rim's answer has been to sue the Salvadoran government for US\$100 million to recoup their costs by using the United States' Central America Free Trade Agreement. As Canada is not a part of this agreement, they had to file the suit under their U.S. subsidiary, Pac Rim Cayman.

Pacific Rim's presence in El Salvador has resulted in social tensions over the potential extraction of the gold and silver deposits, dividing families and communities. Activists are concerned that opening the mine will threaten local water supplies and diminish their ability to grow crops, while supporters see it as a source of job creation and economic development. Three environmental activists have been assassinated within the vicinity of El Dorado, Pacific Rim's prize mine site in Cabañas.

As I have followed the events and assassinations, my identity has indeed become much clearer to me: I choose to identify with the defense of citizens' and a national government's right to say no to a corporation, even if they have the best of intentions. ■

*Alexander Macdonald is a program coordinator at Presbyterian World Service and Development. He can be reached at [amacdonald@presbyterian.ca](mailto:amacdonald@presbyterian.ca).*







# LIVING FAITH

## THEN & NOW

### Three opinions on the little green book

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BARRY FALLS

#### Articulating Belief

An unlikely success story.

BY STEPHEN HAYES

Well Jack certainly got that one wrong.

Jack—Rev. John Weir Foote—was a beloved member of St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., where I served as minister in the period during which we produced *Living Faith*. From time to time I would tell him about our progress on the document. I could tell that in fact he was not all that interested and one day he told me why. "You can work all you want on that document but when, and if, it is accepted it will just sit on a shelf in Knox College and no one will pay any attention to it."

But the summer after it was accepted in 1984, it went on to sell over 20,000 copies. At this point I do not know the actual number sold but would guess that the figure is around 200,000. In any case, the current copy I have before me states that it is the 21st printing and the year was 2003. That's very different than a lonely copy sitting on a shelf, unconsulted, in the Knox College library!

The desire for a new statement of faith goes all the way back to the 1940s and the very formation of what is now

called the committee on church doctrine. I have not actually consulted those early documents but would guess that the desire sprang from a consensus that seemed to have formed in our church that classical Calvinism contained several important overstatements—especially in the areas of sin, which was viewed as total depravity, and double predestination. The concern over the latter resulted in a report made to assembly in 1970 expressing sharp disagreement with the view of the Westminster Confession of Faith on that matter.

The report, highly influenced by the views of Karl Barth, was accepted by assembly, indicating a shift in the theology of our church.

If you think these things do not matter, then gauge your own reaction to these statements in the Westminster Confession of Faith. On total depravity: "... we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil." (6:3) On double predestination: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels

are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." (3:3) It is technically correct to say that the Confession does not teach double predestination—the predestination of some to damnation and the election of others to salvation. The modern reader would simply say, "So what?" and observe that there is no difference between predestination and being foreordained. Note, too, that Calvin put his doctrine of predestination in Book 3, far from the beginning of the *Institutes*. The Confession puts it in chapter 3, right near the start.

On predestination, *Living Faith* reverts to the much earlier Scots Confession and asserts simply that we are elect in Christ. (3.6.1,2)

There had been an earlier attempt to write a new statement of faith, and by the early 1980s there was a feeling that we should try again. Under the authority of the committee on church doctrine, a committee was formed comprised of myself as chair, along with Pat Hannah, Doug Herron, David Marshall and Garth Wilson. We decided to work intensely and met for several ►





# *Living Faith*

A STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF





months virtually every two weeks. Our material was submitted to the doctrine committee and also the faculties of Knox and Presbyterian Colleges. We also consulted with three people on style. We were much aided in our efforts by making an early decision to follow the style and outline of the Declaration of Faith of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Those who have studied *Living Faith* will know how indebted we are to Reformed confessions, both ancient and modern. We also recognize the valuable input of many people, especially those who served then on the doctrine committee. It is true to say that many people helped to shape *Living Faith*.

The year 1984 constituted a magic moment for me as the document was presented to the assembly. I knew it would pass based on my sense of the votes that were out there, but I expected a stormy passage accompanied by much anger and sharp criticism. But none of that happened! After being subjected to a rather gentle line of comment for about an hour, Rev. Ian Victor moved that an immediate vote be taken. His motion passed and only about three or four voted against it—a result anticipated by no one, least of all by me.

That magic moment was repeated in 1987 when a motion was made at assembly to send it down under the Barrier Act to be made part of our subordinate standards. When contentious motions are made at assembly one can always see people drifting up to the microphones stationed in the aisles and long lines forming as they wait to speak. I looked about at those mics and was astonished to see not a single person at either one. The motion was put and passed with a huge majority.

So in 1984—26 years ago—*Living Faith* was received as “an acceptable statement of faith useful in worship and for study.” In 1998 (the year after the original motion, as required by the Barrier Act) it was made part of our subordinate standards. Many have rejoiced at these developments.

*Living Faith* has now taken on a life of its own, as is the case with any written

document. We intended one thing; it is entirely possible that people will see it differently than we intended. I can only speak for myself: I wanted the overstatements dropped. Few today would wish us to speak of double predestination and total depravity in the language of other times. Most today would wish the great teaching of our church restated in the language of today and addressed within the ethos of our times, yet ever holding fast to the good news of God in Jesus Christ. So here indeed is the ancient faith of the church restated for our time—including the Trinity, the deity and virgin birth of our Lord, his atoning death upon the cross and his glorious resurrection.

The initial intention of the committee that worked on *Living Faith* was not to replace the Westminster Confession, but rather to make an acceptable modern statement of faith. But as stated above, the document took on a life of its own and a movement began in the church which neither I nor the committee had anything to do with, to make it part of our subordinate standards. After it was initially passed another minister

in the church told me that when she and others heard who was on the committee they doubted that we would ever agree to a single line of doctrine, never mind an entire statement of faith. But our differences were much exaggerated. The meetings were all pleasant and I pay tribute to the essential Christianity and absence of ego that were present in those who worked with me on this remarkable venture.

From the first meeting I knew how I wanted the document to end, that is with Romans 15:13: “May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we abound in hope!” I was delighted when the committee agreed to this ending. So *Living Faith* ends with hope; and maybe that is what all this effort has really been about—hope in God and the joy and peace that comes with such hope. To use the word again—I hope *Living Faith* has done that and continues so to do. ■

*Rev. Stephen Hayes lives in Quebec City, though he is currently an interim minister at St. David's, Halifax.*

## Living with *Living Faith*

A useful and acceptable summing up of Presbyterianism.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*Living Faith* and I are about the same age. That is, if I count the years from my ordination. Throughout my ministry, the little green book has never been far out of sight. In the first couple of congregations I served, I led studies on the draft and then on the final edition. Folks agreed then that *Living Faith* was indeed “useful,” and more than “acceptable.” Those who remembered their Shorter Catechism were pleased to find a summing-up of the faith in contemporary language. The few who knew about the Westminster Confession breathed heavy sighs of relief.

*Living Faith* was a pretty good summing-up of middle-of-the-road Presbyterian belief in the 1980s. When the novelty began to wear off, we realized how much we had to add to it to flesh out a good study. The biblical proofs in the back of the book made us scratch our heads. (So do the proofs in the Westminster documents.) *Living Faith* didn't turn out to be a great study resource in its own right. “Grist for the mill,” some folks said, but not enough to make flour for a whole loaf.

Then *Living Faith* began to become a fixture in our pew racks. We read it aloud, in pieces, usually without ➤



*Living Faith* wasn't written to be a confession of faith in the Reformed tradition. It wasn't crafted to become a subordinate standard. There was some demand in our church a quarter-century ago for a new resource to use in study and worship. Not a definitive, declarative document ... We have to be careful not to ask too much of *Living Faith*

comment. The parts most read in worship—about God, the sacraments, and the life of faith—still sound good. They put what most of us already believe into good words. Words that “make sense,” folks still say. *Living Faith* is still “useful” and “acceptable.”

In 1998 we placed *Living Faith* alongside our other “subordinate standards,” the ancient ecumenical creeds, the Westminster Confession of Faith from 1647, and the Declaration Concerning Church and Nation from 1955. These documents help us interpret the Bible and offer us words to try on as we struggle to express our faith. The creeds, Confession, and the Declaration were all the product of processes that began with the intent to produce confessional statements. All were born out of times of crisis, or to answer questions that demanded response from the church. The study document “Confessing the Faith Today” from the 2003 Acts and Proceedings tells us that *Living Faith* was proposed as a new subordinate standard because it was so widely used and generally accepted. Creed-by-consensus. Not the well-worn path of struggle to confessional status.

Creeds and confessions in all eras have been bold statements. Often creating or contributing to passionate arguments. The Nicene Creed was both a dogmatic and a political statement. It may have contributed to peace in a failing empire. It didn't end the argument over the person of



Christ it was supposed to settle. Our last contemporary statement, the 1955 Declaration, was inspired, in part, by the daring words of the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany. The Declaration was also a response to the post-war rise of totalitarianism in the east and the military-industrial complex in the west. Some in our church saw a need for a statement more suited to the 20th century to stand alongside the 23rd chapter of the Westminster Confession.

The Declaration was a bold statement, controversial in its time. In the name of Jesus it lays a claim on both Christians and the state. In 2010 it deserves a second look and probably a revision. But it can still stir the blood in a way *Living Faith* doesn't. We could

stretch a bit and say *Living Faith* was a response to the oft and vaguely described “crisis of modernity.” What did, and does, it say to the modern world? It says, in language Presbyterians recognize, that we still believe pretty much what we've always believed. It makes no bold claim on us or the world. At least no claim the world would dispute.

The Westminster Confession, somewhat like the Nicene formula long before it, arose in response to a political reality and to answer drift and fragmentation in a kingdom's church. It proved to be too much for the English church. Puritan and rationalist influences notwithstanding, the Scottish assessors at Westminster were happy to take the document home, where it soon eclipsed the less exhaustive and more doxological Scots Confession. The Westminster Confession did little to cement unity within the kingdom, or in the church south of the auld sod.

Like all true confessions, it was a bold and not entirely successful experiment. Like any document, it began to decay the moment it was printed. We have been reluctant to amend or contradict it. We prefer to honour it as a product of its time, and as a foundational document. We no longer accept the rationalism that led its authors to declare double-decree predestination. The anti-papal rhetoric wounds our ecumenical souls. The Confession provokes us to think, to question, and to seek new ways of expressing ourselves that are in continuity with our old standards. Continuity doesn't mean slavish allegiance.

Even if we passionately ignore it, as many of us now seem to do, our intentional ignorance of it is a theological statement! *Living Faith* started some conversations when it was young. It may still be a good conversation-starter. But as I look back over my ministry, and my life with *Living Faith*, I don't see anything it provoked me to do. The Declaration, on the other hand, has shaped ►



my attitude to government and my political duty, and set the tone for more than one sermon. It has helped me navigate my way through Biblical passages locked into their original contexts in ancient empires.

Walter Bryden delivered a masterful lecture on the 300th anniversary of the Westminster Assembly. He declared that confession is the central act of Christian life. In response to God's grace we confess our sin and proclaim our faith. Written confessions of faith, Bryden believed, properly represent this pattern. Bryden honoured the Westminster Confession, but offered two important criticisms. It doesn't resound with praise, as other Reformed confessions do, and it doesn't reflect the humility that is so much a part of Christian confession. Though it allows for the fallibility of all councils, it's hard to see where the authors genuinely admit they might be wrong.

*Living Faith* begins with worship and ends with a doxology. In that sense it's more in the mould of a Reformed confession than the Westminster Confession. Nothing in *Living Faith* could lead a reader to conclude its authors, or its church, claim to have a corner on truth. But a reader outside the church might wonder what *Living Faith* and its church really stand for and believe is worth confessing as uniquely their own.

*Living Faith* wasn't written to be a confession of faith in the Reformed tradition. It wasn't crafted to become a subordinate standard. There was some demand in our church a quarter-century ago for a new resource to use in study and worship. Not a definitive, declarative document. Much of it is worth our attention, as a springboard to further inquiry. Reading some parts of *Living Faith* in worship can teach, at least a little, people who would never attend a study program or join in a discussion. Parts of *Living Faith* call for new work. Section 8.5, "World Peace," for example, speaks today in only the broadest of strokes. It's fixed in its

time, at the end of the cold war, when threats to peace were still the big wars and big bombs of the superpowers.

We have to be careful not to ask too much of *Living Faith*. Paragraph 8.2.3 can't support the weight we placed on it in 2005, when General Assembly referred to the subordinate standards to answer a question that was nowhere near the agenda when *Living Faith* was written. We twisted an affirmation of monogamy and faithfulness in marriage as it was only known in the 80s into a definitive statement about gender and sexuality. (We did the same to the Westminster Confession. I don't raise this point to suggest a position one way or the other on the vexed issue of same-gender marriage. I suggest we misuse *Living Faith*, and our other standards, when we force them to speak on matters their authors didn't address.) We read the Bible selectively, and take it literally, on matters that frighten us.

The Bible is big enough to take our abuse. *Living Faith* isn't.

The councils that crafted the ancient creeds went on for years. The Westminster Assembly met for six years. During those years much work, hard work, was done. There was debate and dissent. Drafts tried and rejected. Passions ran deep. None of the councils achieved unanimity, but no one could discount the blood, sweat, and tears that were spent in the interest of crafting creeds.

*Living Faith*, I'm sure, wasn't easy to write. Its authors took their work seriously. But what they gave the church 25 years ago wasn't a confession of faith in the Reformed tradition. It's time for us to begin the long, hard, urgent work of finding words to confess our living faith today. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.*

## Ancient Faith

Spoken in the moods and questions of the age.

BY DUNCAN CAMERON

While I was still in my early 20s, a little green book appeared in the hymn-book racks of my home church. That little green book did two things. First, it added to the existing clutter in the pews (and the amount of work that had to be done to straighten them each week), and, second, it gave me my first real introduction to systematic theology.

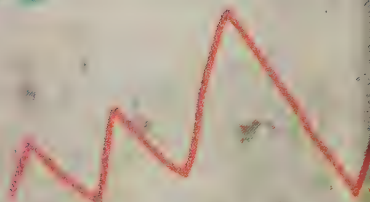
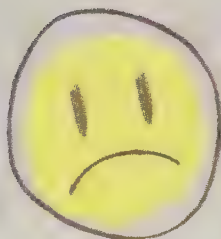
I grew up in an age when there'd long ceased to be any mention of the Westminster Shorter Catechism in our Sunday school. My instruction in the faith came from flannelgraph and David C. Cook. My theology (though, at the time, I didn't know that's what it was called) was pieced together from Sunday school Bible stories, the land of Narnia, and bits and pieces of

sermons that "stuck."

That little green book opened a door to something new, beginning with a realization which all generations ought to have—that life's biggest questions aren't new and that you and I aren't the first ones to ask them. For me, that realization was accompanied by another—that my living faith in Jesus Christ could provide me with a coherent response to those questions. Sunday by Sunday, we read responsively from that little green book and my faith in the Saviour found new roots.

By the time General Assembly was wondering whether to make *Living Faith* a subordinate standard, I'd already completed my theological training—and several years of pastoral ➤





# *Living Faith*

A STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF



In the years since the little green book became one of our subordinate standards, I've had reason to be grateful, over and over again, that its authors understood their task so well. For all its brevity, they gave us a reliable guide to the Truth

ministry as well. As someone who was now familiar, not just with the Shorter Catechism but with the Westminster Confession as a whole, as well as with John Calvin's primer on the faith (all 1,500 pages of it), I wondered why we'd ever consider elevating that little green book to the ranks of doctrinal standard. Sure, it was fine for the pew, I thought. But why quote from a little green book when you could quote the Westminster divines?

And yet, *Living Faith* set out to do something which I'm now convinced those same divines would've supported wholeheartedly. It "confessed the faith anew" (to quote from *Living Faith's* own introduction). And those who composed it 25 years ago understood what "confessing the faith anew" actually meant. Again to quote the introduction: "That confession must at one and the same time be the ancient faith of the church and yet spoken into the mood and questions of its own time." In the closing decades of the 20th century, that little green book was intended to be that kind of confession for people who might not be able to make heads or tails of Westminster's post-Elizabethan English. It was an attempt to restate the ancient faith for modern people—people who were beyond flannelgraph, but perhaps not yet ready for 1,500 pages of Calvin.

In the years since the little green book became one of our subordinate standards, I've had reason to be grateful, over and over again, that its authors understood their task so well. For all its brevity, they gave us a reliable guide to the Truth.

How many of the issues and questions which we face as a denomination today are addressed clearly and succinctly by that little green book?

**How to read the Bible:** "It is the standard of all doctrine by which we must test any word that comes to us from church, world or inner experience. We subject to its judgement all we believe and do."

**The nature of marriage:** "Christian marriage is a union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God."

**The uniqueness of Jesus Christ:** "Jesus is the Mediator through whom God has come to us and through whom we come to God."

**The nature of saving faith in a**

**pluralistic world:** "It is trust in God, involves personal repentance of sin, acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and commitment to him as Lord. It includes assent to the truth of the gospel. By faith we receive the very life of God into our lives and joyfully discover that God knows, loves and pardons us."

**How to approach those who don't have this faith:** "We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance implying that we are better than they. But rather, in the spirit of humility, as beggars telling others where food is to be found, we point to life in Christ. We witness to God in Christ as the Way, the Truth, the Life, and invite others to accept from him the forgiveness of God. We are compelled to share this good news."

In the face of so many these days who seem so willing to not only restate the faith but to rewrite it, *Living Faith* bears witness to a Word which, though always living and active, is yet unchanging and unchangeable as well. Thanks be to God! ■

*Rev. Duncan Cameron is minister at St. Andrew's, Scarborough, Ont.*

## More Food for Thought

### From the WMS Book Room

- ***This Presbyterian Church of Ours*** by John Congram (1995)
- ***An Interactive Study Guide to Living Faith*** by Carolyn Boyer (2004)
- ***Being a Presbyterian in Canada Today*** by Stephen Hayes (revised 1988)
- ***A Catechism for Today*** by the Committee on Church Doctrine (2006)
- ***Enjoying and Glorifying God*** by Dorothy Henderson (1996)

### At Presbyterian.ca

- **What We Believe** as the Presbyterian Church in Canada
- The **Westminster Confession of Faith**, *Living Faith* and other creeds and confessions
- **The Social Action Handbook** by the Life and Mission Agency (updated in 2009)

### At PCUSA.org

- **What Presbyterians Believe**, a series of articles for *Presbyterians Today*



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# PWSDevelopments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2010 Edition, Issue 1

ABRIDGED  
VERSION



## Water for the Future

**C**LEAN WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE, yet over a billion people around the world still do not have adequate access to safe water and over 2.5 billion people lack proper sanitation facilities. Every year, nearly 2 million children die from diarrhea and it's estimated that 443 million school days are lost every year as children and teachers suffer from water-related illnesses.

In addition, spending on healthcare, productivity losses and labour diversions caused by water and sanitation problems place an enormous financial strain on developing countries. For example, the United Nations estimates Sub-Saharan Africa loses about 5% of GDP, or some \$28.4 billion annually because of a lack of clean water—a figure that exceeds total aid and debt relief to the region in 2003. Any attempt to eradicate poverty needs to address issues of clean water and water-related illness in order to achieve lasting change.

Don't lose hope! These grim statistics fail to illustrate another side to the story. Through Presbyterian World Service & Development, people across Canada are finding a way to respond to the enormous need for clean water and sanitation. Program partners in Africa, Asia and Central America are receiving support to install clean water wells, build water storage facilities, reduce the distance women and children have to travel to collect water, provide sanitation facilities and teach basic hygienic practices.

### Water for Life in Malawi

Malawi's population of nearly 12 million people is crippled by poverty—over 65% of people are considered poor and struggle to provide enough food for their families. Chronic water shortages and poor sanitation services are having a devastating toll on communities, especially in rural areas. Diarrhea, cholera, dysentery and typhoid fever are pervasive, although preventable.



Women bear the greatest responsibility for providing water and teaching hygiene practices to their families. However, water is scarce in many regions and many women are forced to travel long distances for water, preventing them from spending time on other household chores. Young girls usually accompany their mothers on the long journeys for water which keeps them from attending school.

PWS&D is partnering with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian to change this situation. In the Euthini area of northeast Malawi, holistic programming is bringing clean water and new opportunities to community members. Wells and latrines are being installed, leaders are learning how to maintain new water points, individual households are learning how to improve their hygienic practices, and water-borne diseases are being eliminated. By working at a local, grassroots level, the whole community is involved, ensuring the project is effective and sustained over the long term. This ensures the work isn't just a "quick fix" but is helping people have a long-term solution to the need for clean water and sanitation.

## A Focus on Hygiene

Preventing illness through proper hygiene is dramatically improving the health of community members. Families now understand the importance of washing their hands, using latrines and preventing contamination of water sources.

PWS&D sanitation programs also look beyond individual households to focus on hygienic practices in places where people gather, such as churches and schools. This promotes healthy public practices and prevents illness and infections from returning to people's households.

"Line up so you can all wash your hands," instructs Emily Manda at a school in northern Malawi before the children take their lunch. The school, supporting orphans and vulnerable children, receives assistance from PWS&D to ensure clean water is available to students and includes training on hygiene and sanitation.

## A Creative Approach

Role-playing and dramas are creative ways of demonstrating the importance of hygienic practices and drinking clean water. PWS&D program partners help groups conduct plays that focus on real health issues affecting the community and teach new alternatives. Real life demonstrations by program staff have also been effective in teaching people how they can make improvements to their health.

The benefits of accessing clean water and ensuring healthier communities through improved sanitation practices is like dropping a pebble into a pond and watching the ripples spread out. Not only are people improving their quality of life, but they are spending less money on healthcare, children are able to attend school more frequently,

young girls and women are no longer walking long distances to collect water, and people are able to focus their attention on growing crops or even starting small businesses to earn extra money.

Working together with partners overseas and Canadians here at home we are helping change the world and build stronger futures through the provision of clean water and better health.

To learn more about PWS&D's water and sanitation programs, please visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd) or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 293.

### Did you know?

Most people in the developing world that have access to water use about 20 litres a day. In developed countries like Canada, the average person uses over 150 litres a day, with the average in some regions as high as 600 litres a day. This comes from flushing the toilet, long showers, leaving the tap on while brushing your teeth... it all adds up.

## Ongoing Response to the Emergency in Haiti

PWS&D continues to work through the ACT Alliance to respond to the emergency in Haiti following the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck in January. Food, tents, hygiene kits, and water purifiers are being distributed to families in need. Medical professionals, engineers and trauma specialists have been deployed to get people the support they desperately require.

You can help ensure victims of this disaster access relief items by making a donation to PWS&D. Call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291, donate online, through your church or mail a cheque to the office. Please mark all donations "Haiti Earthquake Relief."

To receive a copy of the full edition of PWSDevelopments, visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/resources](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/resources) or call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 293.



## Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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Editor: Barbara Sumner  
Communications Coordinator

☒ **Yes, I would like to support Haiti Earthquake Relief**

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*PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development and relief work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

HELP FOR HAITI





## Where in the World is God?!

SEEING GOD IN OUR NEIGHBOUR. BY PAM MCCARROLL

I made my way onto the subway one cold December morning. I found myself squished amidst the crowds, tense about the fellow who was yelling out at the world in words I couldn't understand but I could feel with a jagged intensity; irritated by the teenager who played her music loudly and sang along unaware of all of us around her; judgmental of the woman who was desperately trying to keep her child from leaping out of her arms. It was going to be one of those days, I thought, when all I can see is everything that's wrong with the world. O, how I wish I could teleport myself straight from my home to the college where I work without having to

be intertwined with all these stripes of humanity! How on earth can I possibly see God's presence in my neighbours—the mass of people squished together in the mess of the subway car?

Genesis 1 tells us that we—all of us!—are made in the image of God, the *imago Dei*. Any discussion about God in our neighbour needs to address the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. What exactly it means to be made in the divine image has been the cause for much debate over the centuries. The debates primarily revolve around the temptation to claim too much affinity with God in a way that distorts both the truth of who humans are and who God is and quickly becomes the cause of the sins

of self-righteousness, pride, arrogance, tyranny and idolatry, to name a few.

Some important distinctions in the consideration of the *imago Dei* include those between the essence of humans being made in God's image and the historical existence of human beings in the world. The former, our essence, reflects the divine image—humans ➤

### online extra

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## Divine mirroring is recognized most obviously in acts of gratitude to God that manifest in the world as compassion, generosity, reverence, self-denial and service

as God made and intended us to be. The latter, our historical existence, reflects the distortion from God's intention for creaturely being—particularly in the history of war, violence, oppression, self-righteousness and pride. The distance between these two has been understood through the doctrine of sin, or the Fall, a doctrine that has had a checkered past. In spite of this past, however, what it seeks to show is the seriousness of sin, the way relationships in the world that are not ordered by love become the cause of serious pain, violence and suffering. Our tradition, following the lines of Augustine, Luther and Calvin, holds that the divine image, though distorted at times beyond recognition, exists as the deepest truth of who we are made to be as human beings. It is the fact that we are beloved creatures of God, not anything else, that makes humans beautiful and worthy of love, kindness and compassion.

John Calvin, a central figure in the Presbyterian tradition, was particularly concerned with the meaning of humans being made in the image of God in his context of 16th-century Europe. No doubt, he had seen people claim affinity with God in ways that served injustice, tyranny and self-righteousness. At the same time, however, he sought to articulate ways of understanding the doctrine of the *imago Dei* in a way that could serve Christian faithfulness, particularly in relation to the love of one's neighbour. In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin says even when someone is seeking us ill "we remember not to consider [people's] evil intention but to look upon the image of God in them, which cancels and effaces their transgressions, and with its beauty and dignity allures us to love and embrace them." No matter how difficult others may be, we are called to recognize the beauty of God's image inviting us to love.

In a discussion of the *imago Dei* in the Christian life, Calvin also explores "image" as a verb, as a call to "mirror" God's presence and love in the world. Indeed, he says, all of creation reflects God's glory as a mirror. However, it is only humans who can reflect God's glory consciously in thankfulness. Further, it is in human action and ways of being in relationship that the divine image is reflected. Divine mirroring is recognized most obviously in acts of gratitude to God that manifest in the world as compassion, generosity,

reverence, self-denial and service. These actions are the outward fruits of faith, the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, that reflect a relationship of gratitude to God in daily life. When we meet our neighbour with eyes of faith we begin to glimpse the beauty of a God-beloved creature, the very mirror of God. There is a mysterious giving and receiving of divine presence that meets us in such encounters.

Who is our neighbour? Who are the ones in whom God's presence might be glimpsed? Jesus' response to such questions, both in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and in Matthew 25:31-46, invites us to see that our neighbour is one who is other to us, the one who is the stranger. She is one who is marginalized like the Samaritan. He is one who is in prison, poor and needy. In these parables, not only is our vision of who is our neighbour stretched wide open to include all humans, but they also show that God meets us in the one whom we least expect. "Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me," Christ says. We are invited to see God's elegant and hearty presence that meets us at every turn, in every face, to give thanks and be nourished by this in each moment of our ordinary lives.

As I venture back onto the subway, how can I begin to recognize God's presence in my neighbour—in the guy shouting, in the teenager singing, in the mom struggling to quiet her child? O God, give me eyes to see the surprise of your presence meeting me, humbling and transforming me in this ordinary moment: that these shouts of rage may ring out your own prophetic calls for repentance; that this off-tune singing may blaze out your own joy for life in song; that this struggling mother may call out your own parental call for trust, for peace; that in the very stuff of life you may ground us again as your own beloved humanity.

May it be so. Amen. ■

Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll is assistant professor of pastoral theology and director of field education at Knox College, Toronto.



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# Unmeasured, Offensive Love

GRACE FINDS US. THEN WE KNOW WE CAN COME HOME. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

March 14:  
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32  
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Maybe it's a function of my crochety personality. I'm drawn to gospel stories where Jesus goes out of his way to offend religious people. Like the stories in the 15th chapter of Luke.

Forget all those church windows with

handsome, muscular shepherds carrying sheep on their broad shoulders. Forget the Sunday school pantomimes. Little girls in headscarves crawling around on the floor looking for invisible coins. Put the cotton wool, dried beans, and Elmer's glue away. By the end of three connected parables—we hear the third today—Jesus offends everyone.

He may even blaspheme. Suggesting God's loving-kindness in covenant ➤

## about the artist – PAUL ROORDA

Paul Roorda lives in Kitchener, Ont. His exhibition, *Communion of the Faint: Confessions and Complications*, is now showing at Redeemer University Art Gallery in Ancaster, Ont., until March 22.

For information about this exhibition and to see more of his art go to [paulroorda.com](http://paulroorda.com).



## By the end of this assault on human decency and community values, Jesus ticks off just about anyone who has any religious sense of what's right. Maybe even the people he sets out to defend at the beginning

can be compared to the unmeasured love of an old fool who's such a bad father he lets his sons bleed him dry. And leave him, for all intents and purposes, dead. By the end of this assault on human decency and community values, Jesus ticks off just about anyone who has any religious sense of what's right. Maybe even the people he sets out to defend at the beginning, who may think Jesus is going to excuse what they do. And accuse the righteous men of worse.

The caricatured scribes and pharisees confront Jesus. Point out that he accepts hospitality from tax collectors and sinners. And he gives it back! They have a case! Jesus risks alienation from his community. Loss of honour, if he has any. Maybe not first or second grade contamination, but the shadow of impurity.

Would you invite someone into your home who's likely to take an inventory of your property? Then go and adjust your tax bill! Is Jesus stupid? The ritual of hospitality includes an up-front, verbal exchange of blessing, and buttering up. Jesus goes to table with people whose names shouldn't even be spoken in good company.

A righteous man might open his home and set a table for outcasts and down-and-outs. People whose circumstances identify them as sinners. He'll do it as an act of charity. But he won't be there! Jesus doesn't say, "There, there gentlemen. I know what I'm doing. Let's just sit down and recall some of the words of the prophets."

No. Jesus invites the scribes and pharisees to think of themselves as despised shepherds. As forgetful women. To stand for a moment in the sandals of a foolish father of two hard-hearted sons.

Many of them believe in a pre-Wesleyan version of perfection. They're there, or they're on their way. Jesus doesn't deny their ticket to heaven. But he says they'll have to slip in past publicans and other sinners. Any old soul who wants to change her or his ways.

"Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." So, the angels, God's messenger-warriors, heralds, protectors of the Presence, have nothing better to do than watch for precious sinners to repent! Jesus seems to think so!

According to scribes and pharisees,

the tradition and religion they represent, and the religious calculus embedded deep within you and me, repentance is a good work. Something a serious sinner—usually that sinner over there—has to find the capacity to do. To show God real determination to change. To want to be forgiven. So grace will flow. Or at least be measured out appropriately.

Jesus says repentance is nothing more, or less, than a response to grace freely given. Grace finds us. Then we know we can come home. Even the younger prodigal gets it. When he comes to himself. He remembers there's so much grace at home. He can count on just a little. And it will be enough.

Boy, is he in for a surprise!

Paul writes, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Scribes, pharisees, prodigals, elder brothers, all. All children of a God who sees everyone as a new creation in waiting. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches pastoral theology and directs the distance study program at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.*



While **Trinity, Winnipeg** waits for a permanent home, services are held at a local movie theatre. Seats are comfortable, there are cup-holders for morning coffee, and the large screen is perfect for anything that needs to be projected during the service!

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# In the Spirit

WALKING WITH THE SHEPHERD IN THE STORMS. **BY WILLIAM CRAIG**

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day—  
Revelation 1:10*

**I**t is not possible to be “in the Spirit” without recognizing the cross and sacrifice of Christ in an act of surrender and contrition. I know that I fall short of God’s glory. No one other than Christ has lived a day without sin. I meditate on these matters every day and review in my mind’s eye how I see Christ on the cross. As I draw close to him with a humble and contrite heart, I thank him. I am shoulder to shoulder with him as

if wanting to share his burden and yoke but I know it is not possible because it is something he must do by himself. It is because of me that he is there and I can do nothing except assure him that he is not alone and that I care.

It is a solemn time but as I pause there, a peace begins to envelop me. I am not depressed by what I see at the cross but am uplifted and refreshed. It is the Good in Good Friday. The Holy Spirit stirs in me and I am in the Spirit. This wondrous transformation brings peace and conviction of the truth and dominates my mind. My worldly

**It is a solemn time  
but as I pause there,  
a peace begins to  
envelop me**

mind has been replaced. This is the feeling that I know is from God—it is the mind of Christ. This is what John the Apostle was referring to in Revelation 1:10 and is what I strive for constantly. It is “the Kingdom of God within” that Jesus alluded to ►



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in Luke 17:21 and is the way it will be for all believers when Jesus returns for his church.

By staying in the Spirit I am guided throughout the day whether I am conscious of it or not. The Holy Spirit can put thoughts into one's mind (Luke 12:12), and this is the guidance I need in daily life. The fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, gentleness and self-control—are evident. Selfishness, worry, fear and impatience are gone.

This is my walk with the Shepherd in that moment until events, distractions and my sinful nature quench the fire of the Holy Spirit within. The battle between these two sides is ongoing and as events overtake me and I get caught up in work and relationships, my worldly mind begins to dominate. It is necessary to make myself refocus no matter how awkward it is. It can take as little as a few seconds to go back to the cross and Jesus and be once again transformed.

Jesus was in the Spirit all the time and lived victoriously as a result. By attempting to do the same, I walk with my Shepherd in the storms. It is his agenda. During this time I rest assured in knowing I am where he wants me to be. It allows him to guide and bless me as he can do for all believers. ■

*William "Bud" Craig lives in Ottawa.*



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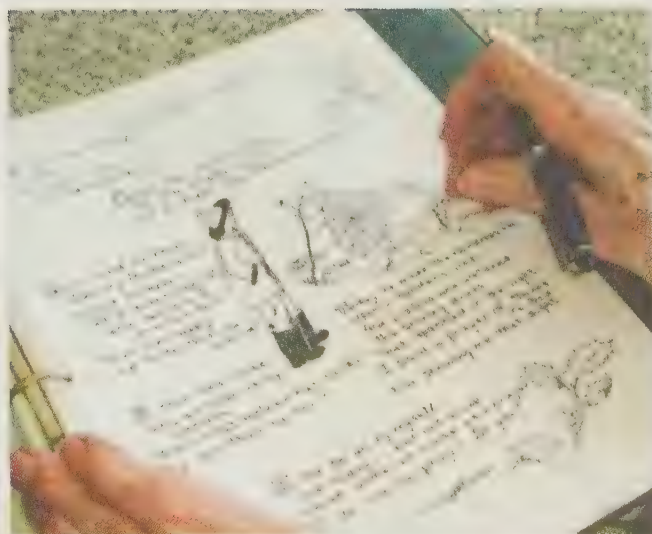
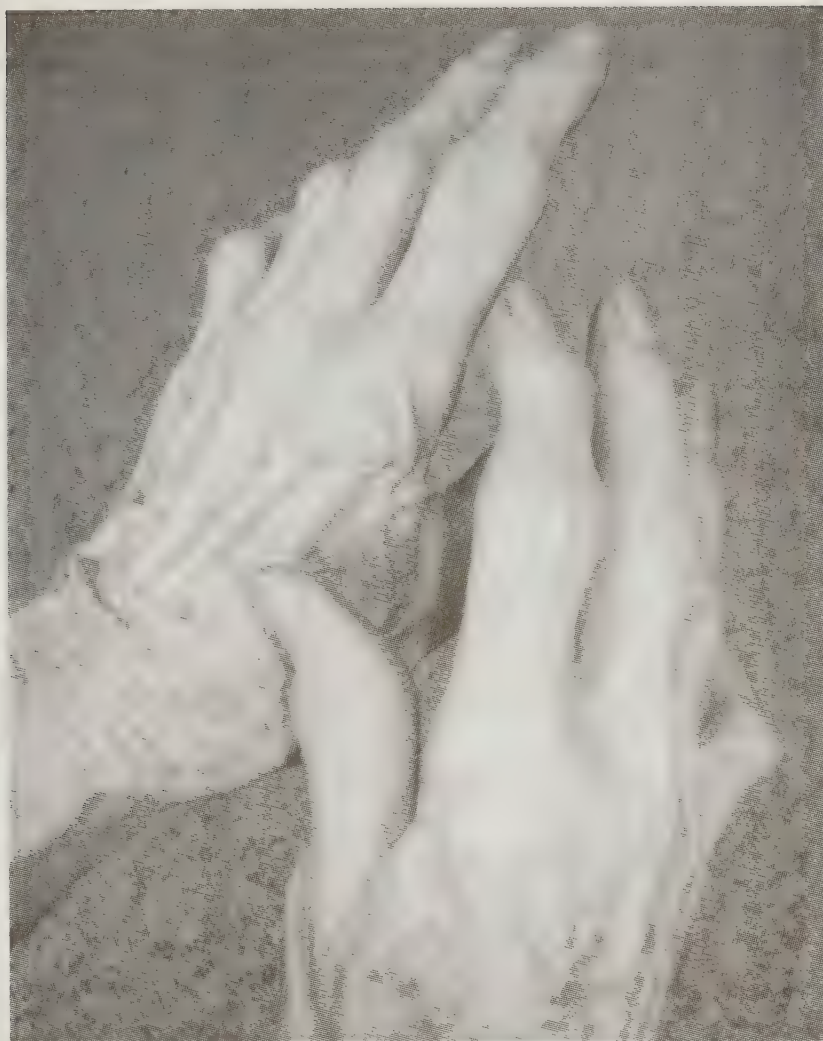
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# Praise the Work of My Hands

ALWAYS WILLING TO ASSIST. **BY AGNES DUKE**

**H**ands: Agnes, haven't you gone overboard in this? Hands are hands, doing what hands are made for ... cooking, eating with, sewing, knitting, troweling, planting, bathing, dressing, and combing, washing dishes, bread baking, and whatever else you find for us to do.

**Agnes:** Yes, all those things and more, but what I'm thinking about are all those things which you do for me that take an extra effort on your part. I know that especially as I become older

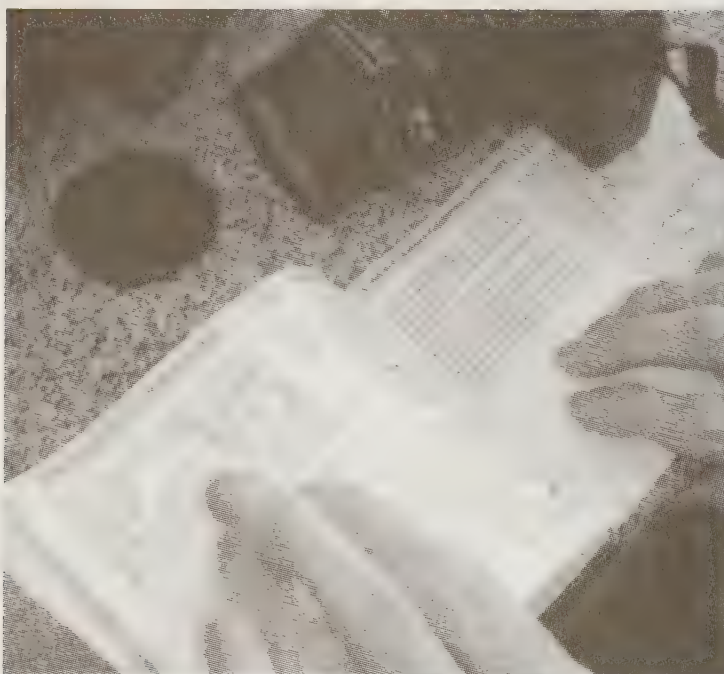
you are expected to push yourselves to the limit. Apologies are offered for asking you to fulfil energy-demanding jobs such as pulling me up a flight of stairs or heaving my body out of a chair.

**Hands:** Granted, they do take some wear and tear; these hands have been around and in use now for, should I say it ... 86 years, sorry, but it is true. We aren't as young as we used to be. But we've never let you down yet, have we? Speaking of letting us down, there was a time when we were let down

very abruptly. That happened in the old carport and those silly old legs let us crash to the cement and that hard working left hand received a broken wrist. There we were in a heap. You somehow shuffled us along the floor to honk the horn until the neighbours came to our rescue. Left elbow had to take over my job for a while.

**Agnes:** Yes, that was a nasty happening. And that was after Rob was no longer with us. He was ever helpful in a time of need, wasn't he? Do you ➤





remember how he was always offering his hands to assist family and neighbours? He had loving hands, practical and strong.

*Hands:* Remember how he offered me his belt to give you an assist up a hill?

He'd say, "Just hold on," and the climb would be made easier. His hands were great in the garden. At his say they tilled, planted, weeded, watered, pruned ... you name it, they knew what to do.

*Agnes:* You really should take a bow for all the difficult tasks done for me, like pulling me up a flight of stairs. Once, at school, I made a comment that made my teacher burst out laugh-

## 'Always willing to assist, Agnes. However, we do notice that over the last few years, getting you out of a chair takes more energy'

ing. I told him I thought I was allergic to stairs. Well, what I meant was that I just don't like them, particularly without a railing for you to hang on to and pull me up or help me down.

*Hands:* Always willing to assist, Agnes. However, we do notice that over the last few years, getting you out of

a chair takes more energy. It takes a great heave now but I remember that when you used to fall down we would have you up in a jiffy ... now we have a struggle and have to rely on your ingenuity to find the easiest method to get you upright again. But so far we manage.

But, Agnes, let's not talk about praise. That just embarrasses us. We have a job to do and do it to our best ability ... we learned that from you, remember.

*Agnes:* Okay, but I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate all that you do for me. Truly it would have been a difficult job without you two. I just wanted you to realize how much I rely on you. But believe it or not, there are greater hands that I rely on as well and they are depicted in the song that starts out like this:

*"Put your hand in the hand  
of the man who stilled the waters.  
Put your hand in the hand  
of the man who calmed the sea.  
Take a look at yourself and  
you can look at others differently.  
By putting your hand in the hand  
of the man from Galilee."* ■

Agnes Duke lives in Victoria.



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# One Body

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED. BY HARVEY SELF

Since James Cameron's Hollywood blockbuster *Avatar* became the highest grossing film in the world only a few weeks into its release, you have to think it's saying something that speaks to people everywhere. Wikipedia says this about the theme of the film: "*Avatar* is an action-adventure journey of self-discovery in the context of imperialism and bio-diversity." Put simply, it is a story about what makes us all one and, on the other hand, what tears us apart. It is a daring study into what connects us all in the human race and in the whole of creation and what threatens to plunge us all into disconnection. In the film, the aboriginal people of the planet Pandora say we are all connected. But will we see it or will we ignore it and suffer the devastating results?

We in the church should be attentive to the message of this film, not just because people all around us have collectively spent over a billion dollars to see it, but because it delves into an issue our generation is passionate about. People everywhere are watching *Avatar* because people everywhere care about what connects us and about what makes us one. People everywhere are concerned about the havoc that will be wrought if the human race does not come to terms with our connectivity to one another and to the world we call our home. The message of the movie is really the message of Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. We are all parts of one body. We are different parts with different gifts and abilities but we are meant to share those gifts and allow the interconnecting parts to work together.

We are different parts held together by the glue Paul calls *agape*.

While I am writing this article, our world is attempting to respond to the horrors inflicted on the island nation of Haiti by the devastating January earthquake. The devastation is so great that nothing less than a global response will be sufficient to help this already poverty-stricken country cope and rebuild. If we in Canada and the affluent northern hemisphere do not see our connection to our brothers and sisters in Haiti, then they will be doomed to dwell in chaos and horrific hardship for generations to come. The fact of our common humanity connects us. The fact that we Canadians love to frolic on the beaches of the neighbouring Dominican Republic connects us. The fact that over 100,000 Haitians now call Canada home connects us. The fact that our Governor General Michaëlle Jean is of Haitian descent connects us.

But most of all the truth of the gospel of God's love, in the gift of his Son, for the entire human race connects us. When we declare, "God so loved the world," we are speaking of not just Canadians but also Haitians and Asians and Africans, indeed all people everywhere. As the old Sunday school chorus declares, "Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight." Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 12 establish our connection, most especially when he speaks



Harvey Self with Henry Hildebrandt of the Anamiewigummig Centre in Kenora, Ont.

THE FACT OF  
OUR COMMON  
HUMANITY  
CONNECTS US

of how we are connected by suffering. "When one part suffers, all the other parts suffer with it." And then Paul seals the deal when he declares, in 1 Corinthians 13, that *agape* is the essence of our connectivity.

Once again Presbyterian World Service and Development is taking the lead for us in the Presbyterian Church by expressing our connection to the Haitian people. As Moderator, I again find myself praising PWS&D for the service they are providing. In our thanksgiving we should be most generous. Nothing less will do for a people who have been given so much, for a church that has been given so very much in Christ Jesus. ■

In His Love,



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **Knox, Burlington, Ont.**

It begins with the personal: In 1984, while visiting her mother, Marjorie Moore became aware of the need long term care facility patients have for visitors. She took a course on pastoral care and worked on her own for four years. Today, a quarter century later, Marjorie has converted a personal mission into a network. She works along with nine volunteers to visit people in hospitals, nursing and retirement homes in the Burlington and Oakville, Ont., areas. She was honoured last November by her congregation of Knox. Later there was fellowship and, of course, cake.



## **St. Matthew's, Wallace, N.S.**

St. Matthew's is part of a three-point charge along with Tatamagouche and Pugwash. On a Sunday in December they brought the Christmas story to life.

## **Sedgwick Memorial, Tatamagouche, N.S.**

Sedgwick Memorial is part of a three-point charge and it keeps growing and going strong: three new elders were ordained in December: Christie MacDonald, Robbie Newson, and Joann Langille, seen here with Rev. Mary Anne Grant. On our website—egregiously cute photos of Sedgwick's Christmas pageant.





### St. Andrew's, Quebec City

Sit down and take this in slowly: St. Andrew's celebrated its 250th anniversary; it's the oldest English-speaking congregation of Scottish origin in Canada. And, of course, they had cake. From left: Moira Hayes, whose husband Stephen only recently retired from St. Andrew's pulpit, Margaret Samms whose late husband Lyle was a previous minister, and Rev. Katherine Burgess, the present minister. On our website—the visiting choir from St. Andrew's, Ottawa, and special guests who came to celebrate the milestone anniversary. *Photo by James Cescas*



### First, New Westminster, B.C.

Two new elders were added to the session of First in January. Presbyterian College Principal John Vissers spoke about identity in Christ: we are the people of God. *From left: Rev. Tim Bruneau, Fred Reason, Harry McClelland, Rev. Dr. John Vissers.*



### Burns, Erin, Ont.

The *Huron Carol* is a Canadian classic, telling of the birth of Jesus from an aboriginal perspective. The children of Burns used a new narration written by Canadian author David Bouchard and pantomimed the story. The children learned about the culture of the Huron people from the early 1600s and created a set and costumes to depict that era—note the creative use of canoe paddles.

### online extra

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Please contact our Interim Moderators:  
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golaïy@sasktel.net and Rev. Devon  
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Moderator Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf,  
c/o Dayspring Presbyterian Church,  
11445 40 Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 0R4;  
780-293-0618; dpcrev@telus.net.

#### SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

No Vacancies.

sons John and Bruce, daughter Janet and  
grandsons Kirill and Theodore.

**LEITH, HARVEY**, died on Dec. 2, 2009 at the  
age of 90. Harvey was an elder of Amos,  
Dromore, Ont., and had formerly served  
as clerk of session. Harvey was a faithful  
servant of God and to the church  
throughout his entire life.

He is survived by his three children  
Steve (Dianne), Rosemary Moskal, Phyllis  
Mawdsley (Bill), eight grandchildren and  
two great-grandchildren.

**ROSS, DONALD**, aged 82 died on Nov. 26,  
2009. A former elder, treasurer, memo-  
rial fund convenor and active member of  
New St. Andrew's, Dover, Ont. ■

*To submit an obituary, contact Deborah  
Leader at dleader@presbyterianrecord.ca.  
Cost is \$1 per word OR \$65 per column  
inch plus taxes. Invoice sent out after  
obituary notice appears in issue.*

## Obituaries

**DUPUIS, TED**, a lifelong Presbyterian and a  
faithful elder in First, Pembroke, Ont., for  
over 40 years, passed away in late October  
at the age of 85. A forester by profession, his  
career extended to St. Jovite, Que., Vankleek  
Hill, Ont., Causapscal, Que., Dalhousie,  
N.B., and eventually to Pembroke.

He is survived by his wife Frances,

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# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

## THE LIGHT OF OUR LIFE

Do you know why you cannot see when you turn out the lights in your room at night? It is because you need reflected light coming into your eyes in order to see. Without light, we would not be able to see any colours, sparkles, shadows, rainbows, or reflections in mirrors either.

Light is important for all people on earth. Plants need light for photosynthesis, and without plants, neither humans nor animals would be able to live. Plant energy was also stored as fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas that we now use to keep us warm, to run machinery and to produce electricity. The light from the sun heats the earth.

Using hymns from the *Book of Praise*, complete the crossword below. These songs reveal the brightness of our inner life with Jesus Christ.

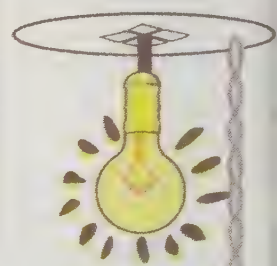
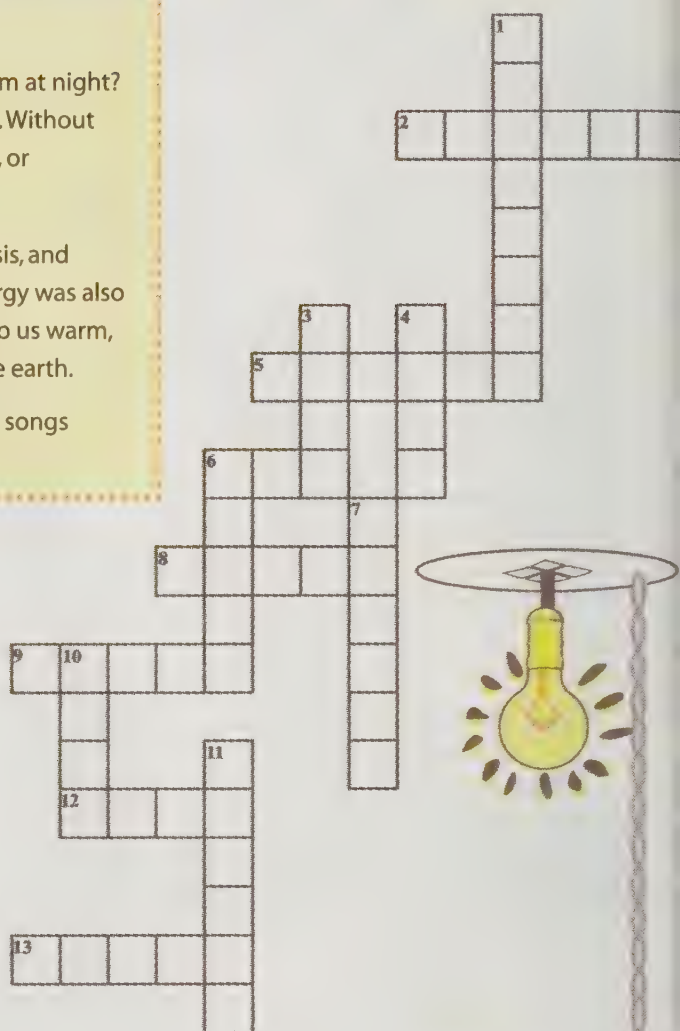
### ACROSS

2. Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light, like a little \_\_\_\_\_ burning in the night #773
5. We cannot own the \_\_\_\_\_ sky, the moon, the wildflowers growing #717
6. By law God enforces the stars in their courses and \_\_\_\_\_ in its orbit obediently shine #338
8. Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way, wanting as a friend to give \_\_\_\_\_ and love to all who live #373
9. \_\_\_\_\_, Spirit, \_\_\_\_\_, set our hearts on fire [same word in both blanks] #376
12. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my \_\_\_\_\_ #496
13. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till \_\_\_\_\_ shall wax and wane no more #275

### DOWN

1. Mine is the \_\_\_\_\_; mine is the morning; born of the one light Eden saw play #814
3. Grant us thy truth to make us free, and kindling hearts that \_\_\_\_\_ for thee #308
4. A stable lamp is lighted whose \_\_\_\_\_ shall wake the sky #219
6. \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_; fill this land with the Father's glory [same word in both blanks] #376
7. Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight, fair is the shimmery, \_\_\_\_\_ sky #375
10. Give me oil in my \_\_\_\_\_, keep me burning! #655
11. I will hold the \_\_\_\_\_-light for you in the night-time of your fear #635

light of the minds that know him, may Christ be light to mine!  
my sun in risen splendour, my light of truth divine,  
my guide in doubt and darkness, my true and living way,  
my clear light ever shining, my dawn of heaven's day. #355





## My faith is very much a familiar place to me. There is so much of it that I know like the back of my hand

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

turned. This fellow was watching me intently. Red-tailed hawks have usually paid me little attention and soared and screamed as I watched them at a great distance through the binoculars. I sat on my haunches and gave this one my best pose.

The hawk soon became bored with me and left. I slowly inched down towards a mud wallow to look for tracks. There were bear, deer, moose, coyote, sandhill crane and the largest set of wolf tracks I had seen for years. This fellow was massive, or at least his feet were, and I caught myself looking over my shoulder into the dark fir forest just to the east of me. Wolves this size are new to this area, moving in from the north over the past couple of years. Chuckling at my nervousness whilst absentmindedly thumbing the safety on my rifle, I moved off down the trail.

I crested a rather steep hill and quickly drifted off its bald summit to the forest edge so as not to be silhouetted. My nose caught the faint odor of something foul. I turned into the wind and began to cautiously investigate the smell. I almost stepped on it.

I was shocked. There at my feet was a large cougar, dead for a week or more and yet still fully intact. This was surprising on two levels. First, I have never stumbled upon a dead cougar before, particularly one whose teeth and girth indicated that it was obviously in its prime when it died. There wasn't even any evidence why it died. And second, though there were all kinds of scavengers in the area, ranging from black bears down to Canada jays, the only thing feeding on this fellow were maggots. Even in death the cougar seemed to have an aura of predator fear attached to it. This was all new too me, and rather odd.

The cougar kept me busy for at least a half hour, and finally I moved off to the south, discovering several new

things in the remainder of my day. The most puzzling was on my return to the dead cougar about four hours later. While still about 400 yards away, a slight movement caught my eye. My binoculars came up and I discovered it to be a small mule deer, and then just to the left, three more. They were all feeding on the new shoots of grass within a dozen feet of the dead cougar. It was as though they had showed up to dance on the grave of their worst enemy. So much for predators retaining an aura of fear even in death, I thought. This new observation is still turning over in the back of my mind as I write. I have yet to figure it out.

As I drove home late that afternoon, I found myself smiling in such a contented way. It wasn't just that the day was such a gift to me, as it surely was. It was that I began to reflect upon the reality that my faith walk was a lot like my ramble through forest and meadow. My faith is very much a familiar place to me. There is so much of it that I know like the back of my hand; certain repeated experiences, certain passages of scripture, certain theological ideas. But the familiarity, "the old old story" as the hymn puts it, is salted with the new. The more I walk in faith with Jesus, the more new things I discover about him, and about me, and about his Kingdom. There is something absolutely wonderful in this, in making completely new discoveries in the midst of the old. Some of the new is quickly processed and filed. Other parts leave me wondering and pondering for days. And some of the delightfully new I never figure out. And it seems to me, the key to discovering the new amidst the old is a willingness to be always observant, to be always teachable.

During last year's celebration of Calvin's 500th birthday, I read Randall C. Zachman's recent tome. I was rather encouraged to discover

how Reformed I am, for Zachman points out it was Calvin who insisted it was by God's design that we should discover Him in meditating upon His natural creation and that each one of us, no matter what our position in the church, should always strive to remain completely teachable within the "school of Christ." In keeping with Calvin's thought, the axiom "reformed and always reforming" perhaps could be better stated as "learned and always learning." ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*

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# New in the Midst of the Old

COMPLETELY TEACHABLE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

“I am off bear huntin’, hun,” I whispered into the dark at a rumpled hump of goose down.  
“Where are you going?” asked a sleepy muffled voice from the rumpled hump.

“Same place as always; two miles south of the power line at 12 mile on the Maze Lake Forest Road.”

“When will you be home?”

“If I am not home by dark I been ‘et by a bar’ and deposited as a hot steamer on the side of the trail. Don’t come looking for me cause I’ll be in a better place.”

Linda chuckled from the rumpled hump, “And the congregation of bears prayed, ‘Lord, for what we are about to receive we are truly thankful.’”

Dawn was just starting to break as I fired up the old 4X4 and headed north towards the Maze Lake Road. By the time I was walking down the power line right-of-way the morning sun was having a go at warming the earth, which only a day or two before had shed the last vestiges of its white winter blanket. I always come to this place in the spring. I know it like the back of my hand. It is familiar to me. And yet there is always so much to discover.

I hadn’t gone more than a quarter-mile when there was a huge commotion from a meadow, the edge of which I was

just beginning to creep along. An enormous sandhill crane laboured into the air with a noisy clatter of wings and rattle of voice. That was new. I had never surprised a sandhill crane before. They always see me and give voice to their discovery long before I have spotted them. I shielded my eyes with my Stetson hat as the crane’s seven-foot wingspan shuttled it into space. The sun glinted off the rusty red plumage on its pate and as it barely gained enough altitude to clear the tall firs at the edge of the meadow, I realized there was something else new in this experience. It was the first sandhill crane I had ever seen by itself in the spring. Since it was a huge mature specimen, and since cranes mate for life and not until fully mature at between two and seven years old, this one was most likely an old widow. Perhaps that was why I was able to surprise it. The thought somehow saddened me.

The melancholy mood didn’t last long. The air was sheared behind me and I wheeled towards the sound. I looked up to see a beautiful red-tailed hawk land on a treetop not 50 feet from me. My binoculars found him and he cocked his head as he observed me with natural vision that was much better than my eyes multiplied by 10. This was new too. I always combine bear hunting with bird watching and today the tables were obviously

continued on page 49



# Our Beautiful Church

BY EDWARD SAMPSON

Our beautiful church, Sedgwick Memorial, is nestled between the French and Waugh Rivers of Tatamagouche, N.S. But how do we define such beauty?



If beauty has a history, then our past shines brightly. Founded in 1926, Sedgwick Memorial has grown and flourished. We were, we are and we will be a place of "living faith." Together, we worship and proclaim Jesus Christ in each of our lives and to all of our community.



If beauty is in the present, then as a church we provide some place where all can belong and be known: the elderly, the not-so-elderly, families, singles, students, teenagers and children. Our beauty is in the fellowship of our members and their interaction throughout the community.



If beauty is a reflection of our faith, then as members we are committed to growing and living as disciples and followers of Jesus. The congregation of Sedgwick Memorial seeks to live his gospel.



If beauty is judged by one's actions, then as a church we welcome people, regardless of their backgrounds and social situations, who are interested in joining our journey of growth and discovery through our faith in the Lord.

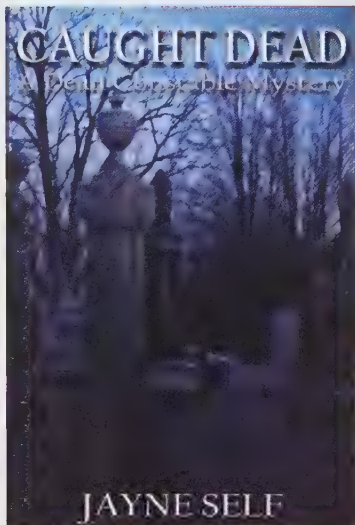


Sedgwick Memorial Presbyterian Church



# There's a Whole Other Magazine Online.

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Constable Mystery**  
*By Jayne Self*

The mystery begins April 5.  
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# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

APRIL 2010

## ETHNICITY, IDENTITY & ISOLATION

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OF RACISM  
ON THE  
CHURCH

PAGE 32

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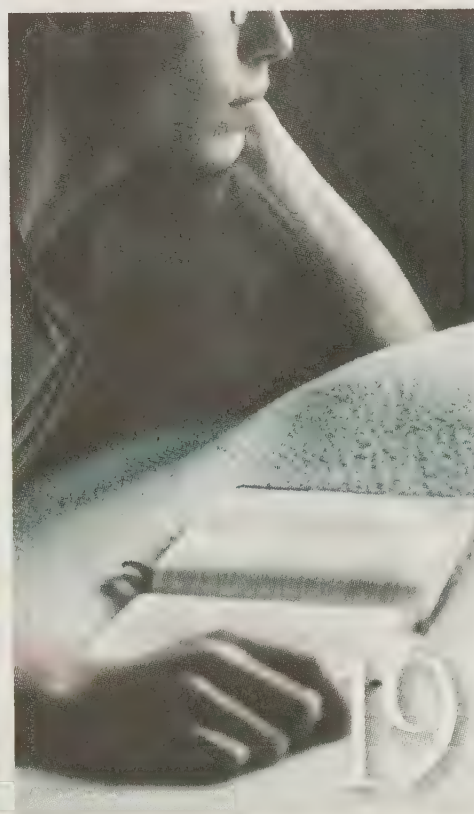
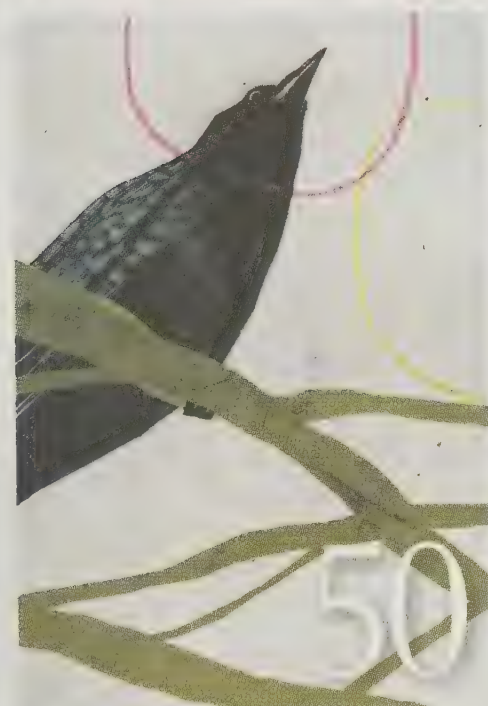


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Photo by Nada Milevska /iStockphoto



Guest Editorialist: IN KEE KIM

# In-Betweenness

WE STRENGTHEN EACH OTHER BY CHALLENGING EACH OTHER. BY IN KEE KIM

**T**he question of identity is difficult to answer. Who am I? Is this a question of "I" who has been, who is and who will be? Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever but unlike Jesus I am not the same. I change constantly. When I say, "I am a Canadian," what do I mean by it? Somebody once asked me, "If a Korean and a Canadian compete in the Olympics, who would you cheer for?" I have to decide one or the other. Is identity a matter of my decision? In that case, if I am a Canadian, then I am not a Korean and vice versa. For people like me who have always lived with a hyphenated identity, this is a dilemma. Often I hear people say, "Go back to your country." If you are not going to live like my kind of Canadian, go back to your country. But I don't have a country to go back to. This is my country. This is where I live. This is where my children were born.

While watching the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, my daughter cheered when a Korean figure skater came out. Not only was she cheering for the Korean skater but she was feeling nervous for her, too. Why? My daughter was born in Canada and she doesn't even speak the Korean language. Is she a Korean? Not in a strict sense. She was born and raised here and she has Canadian citizenship. She will say she is a Canadian. Does she have to negate her "Koreanness" to be a Canadian? She does not feel that she has to. She sees no problem in having both and being both.

Being "in-between" has been my identity. This is something that I



never thought of when growing up in Korea. I was a Korean living among other Koreans. I was comfortable with my mono identity. But now, I am in-between. I am not torn in-between. In-betweenness has become comfort-

**Jesus is the same,  
yesterday, today and  
forever but unlike Jesus  
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I change constantly**

able for me. That is who I am. Do I have to make a decision of "either or?" Can't I be "both and?" Is it being greedy? Jesus was both man and God. His "in-between" identity was the identity of our Saviour. In Jesus, in-between identity became integrated identity. St. Paul talked about our new identity in Christ in a similar fashion: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

(Galatians 3:28) In Christ, the dichotomy was overcome. What used to be mutually exclusive became inclusive. In Christ, the dividing wall has been broken down. Dividedness within us brings division in our relationship. Racism is not just a social problem but a spiritual one.

Identity is not something I decide or choose. Identity is not what other people give me. I am not bound and enslaved to my identity. No one can force me into one identity; no one can impose identity upon me. I am a minister but I am not just a minister. I am Asian but I am not just Asian. When I am around American Koreans, I become a Canadian. When I am around Canadian friends who have different ethnicity, I become Korean. Nominal identity cannot fix me into its name. Identity is not given to me but is being formed within me. Together we strengthen each other's identity by challenging each other, supporting each other and struggling with each other. Han-Ca Presbytery is not an island. It is there to challenge each other, support each other and struggle with each other to enhance and enrich our identity. The traditions of the Highland Scots, Irish, Ghanaian, Chinese, Taiwanese or Korean, together form and build our identity. Trying to dominate each other is not the way to build identity. Just let them freely interact and work it out through struggles and debates, and see what comes out of it as a result. ■

*Rev. In Kee Kim is minister at St. Timothy, Etobicoke, Ont.*



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## By the Numbers

*Re Churches Share Less with National  
Offices, January*

The news item implies Presbyterians had been less generous in their support of Presbyterians Sharing in 2009 than in previous years. In 2003, \$8.4 million (in real, inflation-adjusted figures) was given to Presbyterians Sharing; in 2009, \$7.4 million (again in real dollars) was given. A \$1-million drop in purchasing power.

In 2009, an average of \$65.02 (adjusted for inflation) per member was received by Presbyterians Sharing. In 2003, the average was \$64.85 (adjusted for inflation). Over the past seven years (2003-2009) the support has been remarkably constant, ranging from \$64.85 to \$66.54 (adjusted for inflation) per member. This indicates there is a consistent level of support for Presbyterians Sharing over time.

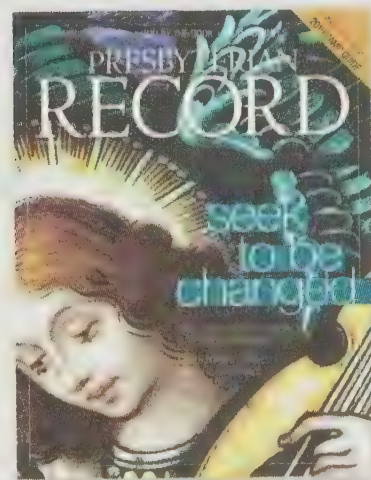
Given this consistent level of giving, why has there been a \$1 million decline in the real dollars flowing to Presbyterians Sharing? At the start of 2003 there were 129,684 members in the Presbyterian Church in Canada and as 2009 began there were 113,104 members—a decline of 16,500. Sixteen thousand, five hundred members times an average giving per member of \$65 (consistent giving level) is just over \$1 million (in real, inflation-adjusted dollars). The crisis in givings is not that Presbyterians are less generous than they used to be, it is that there are fewer Presbyterians than there used to be.

It seems unlikely there will be any increase in the financial resources available to Presbyterians Sharing until the membership decline ends.

REV. PETER BUSH, WINNIPEG

The plea for pity by the national office serves to highlight the need for not just serious discussion but timely decision-making. No one will disagree that it is painful to accept even necessary steps which affect people's livelihoods.

# Letters



Perhaps with a great deal of naivety, I wonder if it might have been possible and more palatable for staff to tithe one half day's work a week for 10 weeks in each of two years, than to cease operations entirely for one week each year.

At the grassroots there are many congregations facing the realities of trying to help people who have lost their jobs with seemingly little hope of finding other employment. At the same time, many congregations are struggling to maintain what may be the only Christian presence within their community. Simply cutting back or shutting down for only one week may not be the option they are forced to choose. As disciples, we are to go and make disciples, but we are all too often sidetracked and thwarted by the empires we make instead.

JEAN PARK, TILLSONBURG, ONT.

## Take the Narrow Road

*Re Responding to Webber, January*

In discussing the issue of who should be allowed to serve the Lord's Supper, C. Joyce and Ray Hodgson argue that the Presbyterian Church in Canada occupies a "wide middle road" between churches of more ➤

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## Pontius' Puddle



extreme positions in one direction or the other. While I appreciate the idea of occupying the middle ground, I do find their arguments quite ironic for several reasons.

First, they claim to be defending the wide middle road position when their position seems neither wide nor middle. They argue that only those ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament should be able to serve the Lord's Supper and they base it on the principle of apostolic succession, a view traditionally held by churches with bishops. I don't think I've ever heard a Presbyterian defend apostolic

succession before.

Second, I must admit to feeling a little uncomfortable with their argument when the one we claim as Lord urged us to follow the narrow road and warned us against the wide one (Matthew 7:13-14). While I agree that Jesus was perhaps speaking to a different situation, and while I appreciate their efforts to encourage some openness, Jesus' warning still makes me nervous about defending wide road arguments too vigorously.

Third, it seems strange that even though the Jewish Passover was and still is led in Jewish homes by the head

of the Jewish household, and even though the Lord's Supper grew out of the Jewish Passover, we continue to insist that the Lord's Supper must be served by an ordained minister and most often in a church building.

Fourth, while it appears that our Reformed theology does put us on a middle road between, say, the high church road of the Roman Catholics and the low church road of the Anabaptists, it's strange that both of those other groups have found ways of allowing others to serve the Lord's Supper. The Roman Catholics do it through commissioned eucharistic readers and many Anabaptists allow it because of a different theological approach. In the meantime, those of us on the middle road have not made such allowances. Don't ironies like these tell us we need to scratch our heads a little more,



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think and pray a little more and carefully consider some changes?

JON WYMINGA, NAZKO, B.C.

With heavy demands coming at us from all directions, our future depends on this.

GORDON COYNE, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

### Help Needed

Why is it so difficult to get a listing of staff who were at Cecilia Jeffery during the period of 1960-1967?

SAM COPENACE, EMO, ONT.

### Needed: Leaders

*Re Letters, January*

I was shocked and appalled to read the paragraph on "overdependence on ministers" in Rev. Chuck Congram's letter.

I agree with the statement, "We still all believe the minister is a leader." What upsets me is the statement that approximately 92 per cent of ministers do not believe they have the gift of leadership.

Well, who is going to steer the ship if the leader of the congregation absents himself from doing so? Lay leaders have always been a strength of our church and will continue to be, but they need to be treading in the footsteps of, and inspired by, their leader, the minister.

Leadership is a skill, and can most certainly be taught and learned. If Congram has this right, it becomes an urgent call to those in charge of the curriculum in our theological colleges. Let us give help where it is needed by providing training on leadership practices and principles.

### Testify

I am a member of St. John's, Port Stanley, Ont. I did not grow up attending church and was brought to this church through God's intervention in my life. The word (the Bible) became real to me almost immediately. God does not make us do anything; it is by free will that we either walk with Him or not. I have just returned from a mission trip to Winnipeg. I witnessed Christians empowering the broken and downtrodden at Winnipeg Inner City Missions. The Anishinabe House of Hope is one of three buildings operating under WICM. The House of Hope is the first of its kind; we should be shouting on the rooftops about the lasting change that is taking place there. They address the whole person and help them deal and recover from a broken past—one full of violence, abuse of every kind and addiction. This is a groundbreaking approach to mission—it is not a handout, it is a hand up. All too often mission outreach is about making people dependant on charity which takes away a person's sense of worth and dignity. It was so refreshing to see real Christians stepping out in faith to help others and preach the gospel in my own country. We are to be the hands and feet of Christ to this hurting and broken world. They are in the heart ➤

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#### A Dean Constable Mystery

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By Jayne Self

### Starting next month:

#### The Messy Table

An interactive blog on parenting

By Katie Munnik

### Online Blogs:

- **The Wondering Wanderer** continues.
- **Pat Schneider** finds faith every day.
- **Travel to Jordan** with Connie Purvis.
- **In Song.** Andrew Donaldson talks about music in church.

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of enemy territory fighting the good fight. All too often we respond as the world responds, or worse do nothing for the needs of people and allow the enemy free rein over our communities. I was richly blessed by being there and witnessing their work. To be a Christian is to be Christ-like; we need a shift that makes a Christian something different than the rest. It is sad how we blend in to the rest of society not trusting God or taking Him at His word. I for one have tasted and seen that the Lord is good and is more than capable of turning a broken life around. But to do it He must be trusted and believed. I would like to see a story done on the Winnipeg Inner City Missions. Rev. Margaret Mullin is the woman who had the vision and trusted God to make it a reality. There is hope there and now more than ever I think we need to see there is more to our religion than Sunday service and fundraising. This is a Presbyterian

mission that is involved in a living and loving relationship with our Saviour. Remember, humanity makes the plans and God directs our steps, but without faith we go nowhere of any significance. I have been on two mission trips to Nicaragua but nothing could prepare a person for what is happening in our own country.

TERESA WILSON

### Our Apologies

*Re Taiwan, January*

As the pastor of Knox, Embro, Ont., which was Rev. George Leslie Mackay's home congregation, I was unsettled at the indignation of misspelling Mackay's name. How could this ever happen? What a great slight to his family and to the legacy he left on the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. I trust an apology is forthcoming to his family.

JAMES H. KNOTT, EMBRO, ONT.

### On our website:

It is becoming a blessed cliché now but there is a lot of passion in our church and it is in full display here in the Letters section. Sadly we receive more than we can publish.

This month, at [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca), we encourage you to seek out a powerful call by the tireless Rev. Stuart Coles. He writes about the Christian Resurgence Circle movement.

There are also several passionate responses to the philosopher, Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland's articles on inter-faith issues in last year's Theology 101 series.

Many of the letters we receive are being posted on our website at the end of articles. We encourage you to seek those out—an immediate forum on the subject at hand. Respond to either the articles or to the letters. We must continue talking amongst ourselves. ■

For God so loved the world  
that he gave his only son...

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# A Vulnerable Voice

READING FOR THE JOURNEY. BY ANDREW FAIZ



**R**ev. David Webber—author of the monthly *For the Journey* column—and I live in two worlds which couldn't be further apart. As you know from his column, David lives in a rural landscape in British Columbia where he enjoys the fruits of nature, with wild animals passing by his large glass picture window on a seemingly daily basis.

I live in the city. I love the city. I love the noise of cities, the buzz, the energy. Toronto is a nice city, clean, and I live in a corner of it which is particularly tree-lined with a large natural park only a couple of minutes away. It's really pretty and lovely, but I prefer downtown, the traffic, the craziness of hundreds of thousands of people negotiating their mutual living spaces, creating art, hustling. I really love New York City, where I can walk for hours.

So it came as an absolute shock to me when I realized a few years ago that I might be *For the Journey's* biggest fan. And it's been bothering me ever since. Why I am attracted to these stories of bears and outhouses—stories which are alien to my life; and while full of wildlife, lack the blood-dripping familiar from the *Boys' Annuals* I devoured as a child? What is it about David's voice?

And then it occurred to me: it has everything to do with his voice. Each month's story starts with action, with something happening. And that action leads David to a meditation. And in the meditation David recognizes his own flaws. He is constantly fallible. His regular co-stars, his wife and daughter, deal with crisis well, but David is rarely with the program.

He's often into himself, into his own thoughts or desires. This month, for example, while he watches birds fighting, it's actually Linda, we're told, who had a hand in keeping them alive.

And sure enough the confession starts pouring out of him: "I am a firm believer in hard work and I used to believe that my hard work was what sustained me. But as I have aged, I have realized that what I need to thrive or even survive, I can't provide for myself."

It is not by accident that the column is called *For the Journey*—faith is not an arrival. David is always discovering his faith each month; and, in the process he makes himself vulnerable. Month after month, he catches himself as human, as a sinner, as weak, and he has to turn once more to scripture to bring himself out of his stupor. And, in this endless exposure, he presents a very human voice.

Each month David is surprised by joy (to steal a great phrase) and each month he turns to scripture for affirmation. He exposes his weaknesses to his reader. To my mind, it wouldn't matter if David wrote from New York City or Tuktoyaktuk because what makes these stories universal is not the location but the voice—that voice that is always open to the faith journey.

And that faith is deeply grounded in scripture. He always returns to the word; and the scripture is always grounded in theology. While vulnerable, David is never alone. He is perpetually on the journey of discovering and deepening his faith. Last month, for example, we travelled with him to discover a large dead cougar, which lead him to John Calvin, and then to "Randall C. Zachman's recent tome."

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That's quite a journey—experience, scripture, theology, and back again. And quite an adventure; luckily there's another one coming every month.

Coda: David has a mischievous sense of humour and I must make a confession of my own: I clean it up. For example, this month he had an imaginative anatomical reference, which I removed. No, I won't tell you what it was—you'll have to buy his books; the latest of which is long forthcoming. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



## Toronto Missions Receive \$1 Million

Funding given for infrastructure upgrades.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

WITH A POSSIBLE ONE MILLION DOLLARS in government funding announced on Feb. 2, Toronto's Covenant House and Yonge Street Mission are stepping up plans to renovate and improve their downtown buildings.

The missions will cover 50 per cent of costs, with the government matching funds up to a combined \$1.09 million. But the centres must complete the renovations by March 31, 2011.

Covenant House, which provides shelter and support for homeless youth, will provide \$627,500 from their capital fund. Yonge Street Mission, which provides a wide range of services and support to the poor and homeless, is seeking \$465,000.

Rose Cino, head of communications for Covenant House Toronto, said the government funding will be "a huge help" and allow the youth shelter to "do some major repairs that have been on the books for a long time" including work on the roof and stucco of two historic buildings constructed in the early 1900s. There are also plans to create a commercial kitchen for teaching cooking, budgeting, nutrition and other life skills to youth.

"The important thing is, this kind of funding allows us to direct more of our donors' dollars toward programs for the youth, but really helps by getting us the kind of renovations that we need," she said.



John Baird, minister of transport and infrastructure, shakes hands with Christopher, a resident of Covenant House, with Ruth daCosta, executive director, and Dr. Rick Tobias, president and CEO of Yonge Street Mission.

Rev. Karen Bach, a Presbyterian minister and mission program and ministry officer for Yonge Street Mission, said staff are moving quickly to seek out necessary funds from individuals and foundations that are likely to invest in brick and mortar.

"We're stepping a little bit out in faith," she said, noting that the mission had only its operating budget to draw from.

Two of YSM's five buildings need new roofs, and there are plans to renovate the second floor of the community centre, turning it into more program space and enlarging the computer lab. The mission is currently renting trailers to provide extra storage for the used clothing store, but construction of a storage building was planned to begin as early as March. ■

## Man's Will Can't Discriminate

A CANADIAN JUDGE has ruled that a man's will could not stipulate the religion of purchasers of his home, calling the move "discriminatory."

Thomas Allan Peach instructed in his will—drawn up more than 25 years ago—that his house be sold to an Anglican or Presbyterian and that the proceeds become part of his estate.

Peach, a single man with no children who died in April 2009, was a long-time

member of St. Mary's Anglican Church in Glace Bay, N.S.

The executor of his will had asked the courts to rule on whether the clause was legal. In a decision released on Jan. 19, Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice David MacAdam noted that the province's Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion in the purchase or sale of property.

He wrote that the stipulation "is clearly discriminatory on the basis of religion."

MacAdam added, "The executor, in carrying out the intentions of the testator, would necessarily have to violate the Human Rights Act.

"As a result," the judge said, "in the sale of the subject property, the executor is not restricted to purchasers who are Anglican or Presbyterian." ■—ENI



# Canadian Military to Remove Bible References

CANADA'S MILITARY SAYS it plans to remove references to the Bible that are inscribed on some of its firearm sights as soon as possible.

Before a U.S. television network broke the story in January, militaries around the world did not realize that U.S. manufacturer Trijicon had put biblical citations on firearm sights in use by forces in Afghanistan and Iraq—something U.S. military officials say could be misconstrued as a Christian crusade in a war against Islam.

Alongside the serial number on one type of Trijicon gun sight, an inscription reads JN8:12. In the New Revised

Standard Version, John 8:12 reads: "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" Trijicon's website notes that the company has put

**"The scripture reference is being removed not in opposition to its uplifting message"**

scripture references on its products "for more than two decades."

A Canadian Special Operations Forces Command spokesperson said the military has a limited number of the affected sights but that the inscriptions are inappropriate and the armed forces will move as quickly as possible to rectify the situation.

David Kettle, Canada's Chaplain General and a Presbyterian minister, agrees with the removal. "The scripture reference is being removed not in opposition to its uplifting message—which I believe with all my heart and wish others to do likewise—but because it is in my opinion an inappropriate place to put a scripture reference and because the company appears to not have been upfront with informing buyers that it was there," Kettle told the *Record* in an email.

Kettle said the reference may also send "an inappropriate and confusing message," because a gun sight is used to help a soldier to his target, which at times will be human beings. "Some would ask, how does Jesus being the light of the world connect with terminating life even for a just cause?"

"I know chaplains who bless guns and weapon systems. I have never done this. I choose rather to bless those who use them, and to help them to write the words and intent of scripture on their hearts." ■ —AM with files from ENI

## Millennial Generation Not Religiously Active

AMERICANS ages 18 to 29 are considerably less religious than older Americans, with one-in-four reporting they are unaffiliated with any particular faith according to a new report released by the Pew Research Centre's Forum on Religion and Public Life. The report is part of a series exploring the behaviours, values and opinions of the teens and 20-somethings that make up the millennial generation.

Religion Among the Millennials explores the degree to which the religious characteristics and social views of young adults differ from those of older people today, as well as how Millennials compare with previous generations when they were about the same age.

According to survey findings, Millennials are significantly more unaffiliated than members of Generation X were at a comparable point in their life cycle and twice as unaffiliated as Baby Boomers were as young adults. And compared with their elders today, fewer than half (45 per cent) of adults under

age 30 say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 59 per cent of adults.

However, on some other measures of religious belief and practice, members of the Millennial Generation are not so clearly different from previous generations. For example, young adults' beliefs about life after death and the existence of heaven, hell and miracles closely resemble the beliefs of older people today. The percentage of young adults who say they pray every day rivals the portion of young people who said the same in prior decades. Millennials also say they believe in God with absolute certainty at rates similar to those seen among Gen-Xers a decade ago.

Interestingly, nearly three-quarters of affiliated young adults (74 per cent) say there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of their faith.

The report, including a summary of findings, is available at [pewforum.org](http://pewforum.org). ■  
—The Pew Research Centre



# Iraqi Refugees Welcomed to Canada

Chapel Place helps reunite families. BY CONNIE PURVIS

AS A CHILD OF REFUGEES, Nouri Garabet says he has always had sympathy for those who flee their homelands. The elder and chair of the three-person refugee committee at Chapel Place, Markham, Ont., was born in Iraq to parents who fled their native Armenia during the massacres of World War I.

"When I was young, my mother used to tell me terrible stories of what happened to my family," he said, noting that his parents' Christian faith likely contributed to their persecution. He lived in Iraq for 30 years before immigrating to Canada.

In August, the first family sponsored by Chapel Place arrived in Toronto, much to the relief and delight of Hanna Aziz, sister of Jwahr Aadsh. The Aadsh family fled their home near Mosul, a provincial capital in northern Iraq, for nearby Syria in December 2004.

Nazar Aadsh, Jwahr's husband, had worked for the Alliance military forces and taught Sunday school; the employs branded him an American conspirator and a *kafir*, or one who does not recognize Allah. He was once assaulted by masked men in 2005, and in 2007 he was kidnapped on his way home from church. He was held in a windowless room until a brother provided US\$10,000 as a ransom.

When a phone threat extended to his wife and his sons, Yoisef and Yoel, days after his release, the family fled.

According to the United Nations, a wave of attacks against Christians and churches in Mosul left 20 dead and displaced more than 12,000 in 2009. It is unclear what groups have been behind the attacks. Under previous Iraqi governments, hundreds of thousands



Iraqi policemen stand guard outside a church in Baghdad, Iraq

**He was once assaulted by masked men in 2005, and in 2007 he was kidnapped on his way home from church. He was held in a windowless room until a brother provided US\$10,000 as a ransom**

of Kurds and other minorities were forced from their homes and replaced with ethnic Arabs. Some claim the recent attacks are perpetrated by extremist Sunni Muslims, while others blame Kurdish political factions trying to push competing ethnic groups out of the regions immediately south of those controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

As an Arabic-speaking congregation, Chapel Place already had ties with

Iraqi Christian refugees; members of the church and community had family members who fled to neighbouring nations, but who were seeking sponsorship to come to Canada.

According to the government's policies, a potential sponsor must prove they can support the individual or family for one year.

Family members already in Canada raised enough money to satisfy the government's one-year requirement and gave it to the church to be held as a term deposit. The church, with the necessary funds and the backing of the national church, applied as the sponsor.

The money given to the church is returned to the host family with interest in three installments—the first two in four-month increments and the remainder at the end of the year. This ensures money is always in reserve in case the host has difficulty supporting their extra family members.

A second family sponsored by the congregation has been accepted by the Canadian government but remains in Jordan awaiting a departure notice. Four more applications are in progress.

So far, the church has focused on those who already have willing family members to help them, said Garabet, but they hope to expand their scope.

"The church also wants to help refugees who have no one," he said. "We want other churches and coalitions of churches to get involved, to learn the plight of Iraqi refugees." He suggested Chapel Place is willing to help wherever it can be useful, with things with translation between Arabic and English.

For more information about refugee sponsorship, see [presbyterian.ca/refugees](http://presbyterian.ca/refugees) ■ —with files from Human Rights Watch



# Community News Briefs

## Crieff Hills to Hold Fundraising Auction

CRIEFFHILLSCOMMUNITY, the sprawling 250-acre retreat and conference centre near Guelph, Ont., is holding an auction on May 15 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30, with viewing of items beginning at 9:30. The event will feature both a live and silent auction. Antiques, art work, quilts and other items will be sold to raise money for Crieff's Build a Place Apart capital campaign that will update and expand the facility. The overall cost is \$2.5 million, though the first phase carries a price tag of \$850,000. As of the end of January, about \$350,000 had been raised. Participants at the auction will also have the opportunity to hike Crieff's groomed

trails, and refreshments will be served. Crieff is located at 7098 Concession 1, Puslinch, Ont. Visit [crieffhills.com](http://crieffhills.com) or call 519-824-7898 for more information. —A.M.

## Evangel Hall Gala

TORONTO'S EVANGEL HALL raised almost \$200,000 on Feb. 6 as over 150 people glittered through the halls of Toronto's Royal York Hotel at the second annual Compassionate Hearts Valentine's Gala.

All proceeds from the event will support the mission's health and dental clinic, which provides free treatment to Toronto's poor and homeless. The clinic costs almost \$100,000 a year



Evangel Hall supporters Clare Mezes-Pandy (left) and sister-in-law, Elizabeth Szekeeres.

to run and relies heavily on personal donations, grants, and support from various foundations. The Hall is funded largely by congregations, but also receives funding from Toronto presbyteries. —C. Purvis

## Foodgrains Bank Events

THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS Bank—a food justice organization of which the Presbyterian Church is a member—is holding its Spring workshops this April at various churches in Ontario. The theme for this installment is Climate Change and Hunger and will be led by Carol Thiessen, a CFGB policy analyst who will speak about the time she spent in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Workshops are scheduled on April 7, 8, 9 and 10, and several feature potluck suppers. No prior knowledge of the CFGB, food justice or climate change is needed, and there is no registration. Participants are asked to bring an item for the suppers.

CFGB is also in the process of organizing a potluck picnic for former CFGB study tour participants. The event will be hosted at a church in New Dundee, Ont., on July 17. Details are still to come. For more information on either event, contact David and Kathryn Mayberry, Ontario coordinators, at 519-485-3642 or [mayberry@xplornet.ca](mailto:mayberry@xplornet.ca). To find out more about CFGB, visit [foodgrainsbank.ca](http://foodgrainsbank.ca). —AM ■

## The Story Behind ... The Rabbi Preacher

RABBI DR. STAN CHESTER, head of Torah Light Ministries, appeared in the pages of the *Record's* December issue as he celebrated Passover at St. Andrew's, Penticton, B.C. But where did this interfaith relationship begin?

The Messianic rabbi was teaching in a local library one Friday evening in the fall of 2008. Kenny MacKenzie, an elder at St. Andrew's, chose to attend.

"It was an eye opener to say the least!" MacKenzie told the *Record* in an email. "I kept attending and soon learned that the rabbi's teachings and Presbyterian teachings were about 98 per cent on the same page with the only difference being that, as Jews, they keep the covenants which God made with the Jews and not with Gentiles."

When the library rental fees were set to rise, MacKenzie approached the church's session asking if Chester's group could use the hall for Friday evening synagogue. The session approved the motion unanimously. Some of the Jews have begun attending St. Andrew's Sunday morning services, and some Presbyterians frequent the Friday evening synagogue.

When the rabbi filled the pulpit one Sunday, he was one of the few preachers to be applauded by a Presbyterian congregation, MacKenzie noted. And what began as a joint Passover celebration between the Presbyterian and Jewish groups expanded the next year to include members of several other churches, including the Church of the Nazarene which hosted the event.

Chester, a former marine and physics professor, is fluent in Hebrew and founded Torah Light Ministries in 1972 as a way of helping both Christians and Jews better understand and appreciate each other. ■ —C. Purvis with files from Kenny MacKenzie and [torahlight.org](http://torahlight.org)



# Trinity, Oro, Bounces Back

Congregation is healthy, happy and growing. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

LESS THAN THREE YEARS AGO, a healthy and thriving Trinity Community Church in Oro, Ont., didn't look like it would survive. Its minister left to start a new congregation affiliated with a conservative church in the United States. The move might not normally have been crippling, but Rev. Carey Nieuwhof took most of Trinity's 1,000-plus members with him.

"We were quite down-hearted. We didn't know if we could keep the church going," said Harry Thompson, an elder and long-time member at Trinity. "But we put our faith and trust in the Lord and He pulled us through."

About 50 people were at the first congregational meeting in October 2007, just weeks after the split. Today, an average of 150 come out for Sunday worship, and both youth and kids' ministries are starting to grow.

Rev. Mike Hamilton, who was

ordained as Oro's minister last June, said there is still much work to be done, but the congregation is excited about its growth and vitality. He attributes the success to several things—one is a strong volunteer base that has been committed to Trinity's future from the beginning.

Authenticity is another. "We're emphasizing our relationship with Jesus," Hamilton told the *Record*. "It's not just about an hour on a Sunday, but how Jesus affects the rest of your life."

Hamilton said the congregation is working hard to show they are genuinely concerned for their community, so far holding vacation Bible schools and movie nights that are open to all. A mission statement that emphasizes relationship will push the congregation to build upon such outreach as it continues to find its footing. A welcoming, accessible, engaging, and friendly Sunday worship experience is

another key. "It's more than just a handshake at the door," said Hamilton.

Both Hamilton and Thompson underlined the support received from the national church. Financial donations were received from congregations in British Columbia to Newfoundland; the PCC carried Trinity's mortgage when it couldn't afford to do so; presbytery was always willing to offer advice; congregations loaned their ministers (who helped direct Trinity's vision towards newness and success) for pulpit supply; and interim moderators Neal Mathers and Keith Boyer offered invaluable guidance. "All of this helped the congregation carry on and be encouraged," said Hamilton. "And for that we are very grateful."

"I am quite sure we are on the move," said Thompson. "We owe a great deal to the church at large. We're still praising God. We have to give all our thanks to Him." ■

## College Convocations

Annual events feature eclectic mix of special speakers.

### Presbyterian College, Montreal

**Date:** May 13, 2010

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul

**Speaker:** Prof. Ellen Aitken, dean of the faculty of religious studies at McGill University, Montreal.

**Recipient of Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree:**  
Rev. Ian Victor, minister at St. Andrew's, Victoria, B.C.

### Vancouver School of Theology

**Date:** May 10, 2010

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Kerrisdale Presbyterian

**Speaker:** Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor, author, professor, and Episcopal priest.

**Recipients of Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degrees:**  
Rev. Jean Morris, director of spirituality and pastoral care services for the Bethany Care Society, Calgary, and a

former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Rev. Dr. Derek Evans of the United Church of Canada, an independent consultant in leadership and human rights and longtime senior employee of Amnesty International.

### Knox College, Toronto

**Date:** May 12, 2010

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** Convocation Hall, University of Toronto

**Speaker:** Dr. Don Posterski, researcher, author and former director of faith and development at World Vision International.

**Recipients of Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degrees:**

Rev. Ian S. Wishart, former minister at St. Andrew's, St. John's, and contributor to *Living Faith*. Wilma Welsh, elder at Knox, Guelph, Ont., and a former Presbyterian moderator. She has been an active member of the Women's Missionary Society, is a former missionary to Taiwan, and was formerly administrator at the Board of Congregational Life and International Ministries. ■



**The Other Six Days** BY BRADLEY CHILDS

# The Comic Book God

Illustration from *The Manga Bible*, illustrated by Siku

## Website

Presbymergent is an online community designed by ministers and seminarians. The community hosts blogs, articles and podcasts, provides resources, and hosts seminars. Presbymergent is an attempt to explore what it means to be a Presbyterian (PCUSA) in a quickly changing, postmodern world.

**FIND IT @** [presbymergent.org](http://presbymergent.org)

## Bible Verse of the Day

Growing up in a conservative evangelical church, I've got to say I can distinctly remember putting a blue highlighter on this verse to remind me to ask my pastor about it later.

### *Proverbs 31:6-7 (ESV)*

*"Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more."*

## Charity

The Yellow Bird Project is a Montreal-based non-profit company. It uses Canadian artists and well known Indi-rock bands to design t-shirts. Each artist chooses a charity, and money from every design sold goes directly to

that charity. The Project raises money for hundreds of charities and makes some pretty cool clothes too!

**FIND IT @** [yellowbirdproject.com](http://yellowbirdproject.com)

## Quote

"Could God microwave a burrito so hot that He Himself could not eat it?"

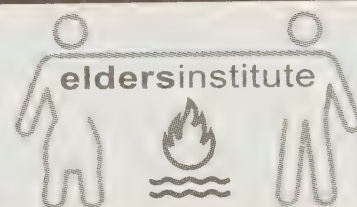
## Comic Book

In Japan, people of all ages read manga, a Japanese comic. It is a multi-billion dollar industry; they even have 24-hour manga bars where people read all night. But manga is much more than just a comic. Manga covers all styles and targets every age group. People read manga romance, comedy, and even history. So it was just a matter of time before this came out: *The Manga Bible*! Endorsed by Rev. Dr. Rowan Douglas Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, this comic book Bible is both loved and hated. It has been criticized for its graphic depictions of violence and sexuality. Then again, have you read your Bible lately?

**FIND IT @** [theartofsiku.com/index.htm](http://theartofsiku.com/index.htm) ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

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# Crossing the Border

A mission experience tour draws delegates into the lives of Mexican migrants. BY CONNIE PURVIS

ON NOV. 12, 2009, GREG WAGLAND stood vigil near a pile of trash in the Sonoran Desert, one of the largest and hottest deserts in North America. He was one of almost a dozen participants in a 2009 mission trip who stopped for a moment of silence beside the piles of discarded backpacks and clothing, the forlorn remains of Mexican peoples' journeys toward the U.S. border.

"Migrants dump things as they approach the border so they look less like they've spent days in the desert," he explained to staff at national offices during a December presentation. He called it "holy trash" because it represented "people leaving behind memories to embark on a new life."

Wagland, of Glenview, Toronto, was one of five Presbyterian delegates on a nine-day study tour that exposed participants to the plight of refugees in Canada through a visit to Action Réfugiés Montreal, and then to the journey of Mexican migrants through a tour led by Border Links, a bi-national non-profit organization. The group spent five days in various towns along the Mexico-Arizona border learning about the work of churches and organizations that are providing assistance to those who seek to migrate to

the United States, or who have been deported back to Mexico. The tour ran Nov. 6 to 14, 2009.

There were about 11.6 million Mexican immigrants in the U.S. in 2006, making them the largest single immigrant group in the country, accounting for 30.7 per cent of all immigrants. According to the Office of Immigration Statistics, about 6.6 million were in the country illegally.

During the trip, the delegation met with former E. H. Johnson award-winner Rev. John Fife, a retired PC(USA) minister who co-founded No More Deaths, a migrant rights group that provides food, water and medical aid

to undocumented or deported immigrants. They also visited Café Justo ("Just Coffee"), a coffee co-operative created by PC(USA) minister and author Rev. Mark Adams to help local farmers profit from their Mexico farms, thereby addressing one of the root causes of labour migration—an inability to make a living in one's home country.

But Wagland said the group was especially inspired by Jose Ramirez, a man who plans to teach trade skills to Mexicans to encourage them to stay in Mexico. The delegation "had mixed reactions" as they left DouglaPrieta Works, Ramirez's shabby teaching centre. "Some of us said, 'He had great

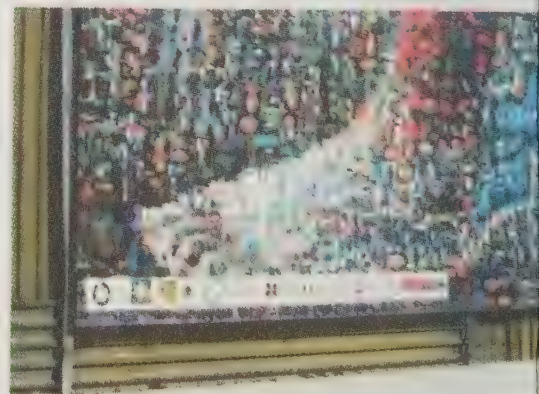


Above: the participants follow in the steps of migrants in the Sonoran Desert Below: a mural on the wall that divides Mexico and Arizona.

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idealism, but all he has is a shack and some sewing machines.' But one of the delegates crackled to himself and said, 'Don't you get it? He's a crazy person with 12 followers! Doesn't that remind you of someone?' We all came out of that thinking, let's not count Jose out just yet."

**"Don't you get it?  
He's a crazy person  
with 12 followers!"**

The trip taught Wagland that migration issues are always more complex than they seem. "All of those interests and viewpoints crystallized for me," he told the staff. "You can't see any borders from space. It's just land; it's just earth. I think I'm getting closer to seeing the world the way God sees the world—full of people who are equal who may be struggling against each other." ■—*with files from the Migration Policy Institute*

A set of sneakers abandoned in the desert.



## Over \$1.5 million raised through PWS&D Appeal



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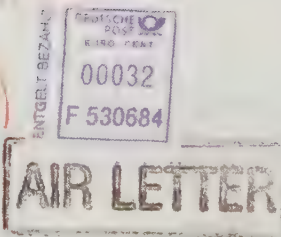
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## Letter from Guatemala

## Continual Motion

Families follow harvest in order to survive. BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD



SWERVING MY WAY UP and around a bend in the rutted track, a smattering of adobe houses interspersed with small plots of 15-foot corn stalks opened just below. The community of Las Doncellas lies in a bowl in the highlands of Guatemala where every inch of the steep inclines running up the hills are planted with corn.

Several of the men from the community greet me and we make our way into the closest house. A haze of smoke from a wood stove in one extreme of the room fills the air, and the sweet aroma from the pot of coffee gently brewing draws me into the cozy, dimly lit home of José and Amparo Ordóñez.

One of the great pleasures of my job as a program coordinator with

Presbyterian World Service and Development is to get away from the formats and reports that measure the results and impacts of the work, and spend some fleeting moments listening to the life stories of those who participate in the projects.

José, Amparo, and their four children lead transient lives. In fact, the whole community of Las Doncellas lives continually with motion, crop cycles, and the global economy.

Only a portion of the year is spent in what the Ordóñez family considers home. Just enough time to plant and harvest their maize and beans. With two potential crops each year, this supplies a part of their annual food needs. However, it leaves a "hungry season" of several months, which in recent years has become longer and longer due to failing rains.

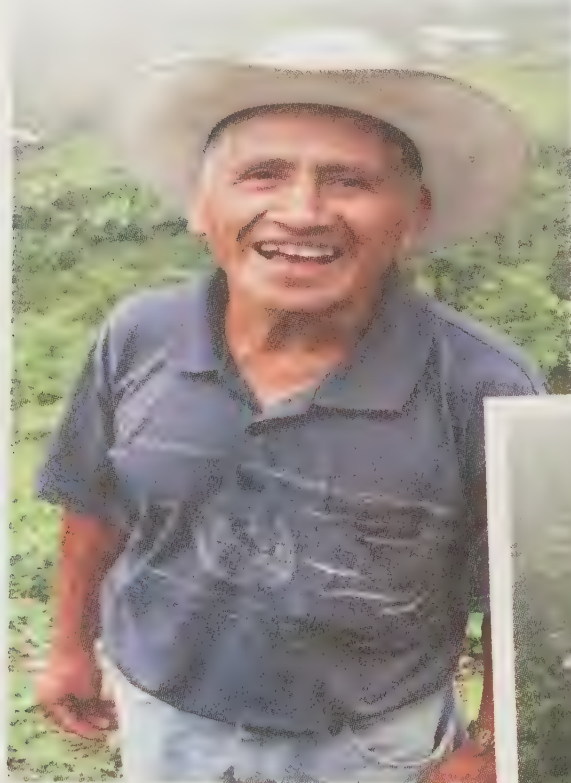
To get through this season, José and Amparo sell their labour to large landowners that are harvesting their crops. Wherever that might be in the country is where they and most of the rest of the residents of this quiet village go.

Guatemala's economy is

highly dependent upon the monoculture planting of cash crops for export to the global market. Bananas, coffee, sugar, and cotton are the traditional crops that dominate the planting and harvesting season on the massive farms run throughout the Guatemalan countryside. Jobs are scarce throughout the year, but harvest time causes mass internal migrations for short-term injections of cash.

The face of these boom and bust industries has changed significantly in the past decades. Coffee's price plummeted, while sugar and cotton have mechanized to the point where minimal jobs are available for the surfeit of labour. There is a new kid in town, African palm oil, which is pushing the agricultural frontier of the country into clearing of the northern jungles.

José and Amparo continue to travel to the coast each year, with the whole family in tow, for the sugar harvests, but say they will soon have to head north for work. Only upon my return to Canada did I realize the linkage of my lifestyle to their migration patterns. North America's limiting of trans-fats in our diets and Europe's push for biodiesel is the true wave that causes ripples throughout Guatemala. ■



A resident of Las Doncellas, Guatemala; the village of Las Doncellas is nestled in lush highlands.



Alexander Macdonald is program coordinator for the Americas at Presbyterian World Service and Development. He can be reached at [amacdonald@presbyterian.ca](mailto:amacdonald@presbyterian.ca).





# “God Spoke to Me”

OR DID HE? HAVING THE AUDACITY TO ASK. **BY RICHARD TOPPING**

**“DO YOU THINK** that God might be speaking to me?” he asked. This young man was new to the Presbyterian Church and to Christian faith, and so had the audacity to wonder about such things. It reminds me of the saying: “A saint is someone who speaks often to God. A lunatic is someone to whom God often speaks.”

He’d been reading John chapter 5—the story of a man lame and lying by a pool hoping for healing for 38 years. Jesus approaches this sad case and asks, “Do you want to be made whole?” And the lame man responds,

“Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” When I read this passage, the lame man sounds like someone who feels good about feeling bad; the type of person who extorts sympathy by means of his woe-begotten tale. This isn’t the way the young man heard God speaking to him by means of the story.

He said, “I was wondering whether these words were for me? Maybe God wants me to be someone who helps people who have no one else to help

them?” This is a different sort of question than ministers often get. Often folks want to know whether it ought to be carpet or tile in the kitchen, whether the meeting ought to be Tuesday or Thursday. “Do you ►

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## Our vanity, instability and need for inventiveness do co-opt scripture to our own desire. It is true that we like to identify with the figures of the Bible who are the winners

think it's God speaking to me through the Bible?" he asked.

A question like that unsettles the clergy; it unsettled me. I know that we offer prayers for illumination in church before we read scripture texts and preach. We lay ourselves open to the word of God by means of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. I know that it is a bona fide profession in our Reformed tradition: "the word of God preached is the word of God." I have sung many, many times, "Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me ..."

However, when confronted by this intelligent undergraduate in philosophy who asked whether God was speaking to him, a member of the clergy can come to realize how shaped we are by secular, single-layered, late modernity. We find ourselves more comfortable with almost any explanation other than, "It was God!"

What runs through our minds is: "I wonder if he had a good night's sleep,"

or "Isn't this a case of self-aggrandizement?" or "The nerve: God speaking to him?" or "That sounds like wish fulfillment—he's at that stage of life." I believe that the world in which we live has catechized and confirmed us all in explanatory atheism or at least cynical suspicion about any claim that God speaks.

It would be naïve, however, to contest that we sometimes (even often) are deceived by ego or ethnocentricity in our reading of the Bible. Our vanity, instability and need for inventiveness do co-opt scripture to our own desire. It is true that we like to identify with the figures of the Bible who are the winners, the more rather than the less pious, the hero rather than the villain and sometimes we display too much interpretative imagination. Classical biblical interpreters, like John Calvin, draw attention to our lack of piety, not to our lack of technical expertise, when they search for reasons for why we go wrong in Bible reading. The cultivation of a teachable spirit, a certain self-mortification and a willingness to offer grateful response is required of serious listeners for God's voice. If the young man that came to my office had said, "You know, Jesus is a lot like me—healing people and all, I can be like that," I'd wonder if it wasn't a Messiah complex.

Interpretation can go also awry when we get the words or the context of a passage just plain wrong. Sometimes what we think God is saying is just a mistaken interpretation, a failure to grasp what scripture says. If the young man came to me and said that he felt God wanted him to be a pool-shark because of the story of the lame man at the pool whom Jesus healed, it would offend against the obvious sense of the story. I would be right to be suspicious about that sort of incompetent, misinformed interpretation.

The way the story goes, the words used, the critical historical and literary context, rule this interpretation out. What's more, there's the larger context

of the overall story of the Bible, and calling people to be pool-sharks (with the implication of ripping people off) just doesn't seem all that consistent with the main lines of the big story. Pool sharking wouldn't conduce to the love of God and neighbour; even if Jesus, the Saviour, does seem to have spent time hallowing the ancient equivalent of pool halls.

"Do you think that God might be speaking to me?" To admit that there may be a distinction between what I sense God says and what God says is refreshing. It opens a space for prayerful discernment with the church. The very fact that this reader of the Bible would submit his own sense of God's voice through scripture to the discernment of the fellowship provides, I think, a check on interpretative fancy.

When we say: "I believe ... in the communion of the saints," don't we commit ourselves to a community of interpretation, with those living and dead, who have tried to read scripture to discern the risen Christ speaking by means of it? It was Eli who helped Samuel understand the voice that he heard in the night as God's voice, and to answer it (1 Samuel 3). Philip was the one who taught the Ethiopian eunuch to understand what he read from the prophet so that he confessed and was baptised (Acts 8). And the clergy—ministers of Word and Sacrament, even though we can shy away from it—are called to help Christians discern the word in the words of scripture.

I really do think God spoke by means of scripture to the young man who entered my office that day. I believe that because his was a call to waste his life, to put it all on the line, for the sake of others. And there's just something about hearing that sort of word that confirms God's behind it. The pattern is strangely, hauntingly, familiar. ■

*Rev. Dr. Richard Topping is professor of studies in the Reformed tradition at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology.*





The Incredulity of St. Thomas, by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio;  
1601-1602; oil on canvas

# Believing Thomas

NAGGING DOUBTER OR MODEL DISCIPLE? **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

*April 11:  
Second Sunday of Easter  
John 20: 19-31*

**S**uppose, up in heaven, the inner circle of Jesus' disciples have a reunion. Matthias—Judas' replacement—wants to catch up with the others. So he asks them, "Where were you when Jesus died?" Talk about an embarrassed silence. Who might speak first?

The women who followed Jesus stayed by him until the end. Where did the men go?

Matthias could be kinder. Ask, "Where were you when you first met him alive again?" We can hear the sigh of relief. They were still together. Most of them. What a night that was! Then they catch their breath. The truth? They were hiding. He had to pass through a locked door. Cut through their fear.

Where was Thomas that night? Day and night, while the others cowered behind locked doors, I imagine Thomas was out in the streets of Jerusalem. Looking for him.

It's his way. He sizes up a situation.

Then says, "Okay. Let's do it." When he isn't sure about things, he asks for more details. When Lazarus is sick, Jesus waffles about going to see him, then heads for Bethany after his friend has died. They all know how dangerous it will be for Jesus. What does Thomas say? "Well then. Let's go there and die with him!" (John 11:16) I see Jesus and Thomas head up the road. Then stop to let the others catch up.

When Jesus says his long goodbye, he says he must go. He says, "You know the way ..." Thomas wants to hear and understand everything Jesus says. ➤



# If Thomas' doubts condemn him, why does John tell us Thomas made the most profound confession of faith? "My Lord and my God!" Jesus' invitation to Thomas is an act of love

"Excuse me, Lord. We don't know the way. How can we? We're not like you." (14:5) Jesus says, "I am the way ... the truth and the life ..." That's enough for Thomas.

Thomas says, "Mary says he's up and about. Peter and John saw an empty tomb. Maybe the two stories don't add up to much. But if Jesus is who I know him to be ... He's out there somewhere."

If you came home after a day walking the streets and found your friends

clean and rested, celebrating something you had missed, wouldn't you be a little cranky? "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." (20:25)

A week later, Jesus comes back. This time it's for Thomas. "Do not doubt but believe." If this is a rebuke, why does Jesus offer Thomas the proof he asks for? Why not just command him to believe? If Thomas' doubts condemn him, why does John tell us Thomas

made the most profound confession of faith? "My Lord and my God!" Jesus' invitation to Thomas is an act of love.

Then he says one of those gospel words spoken over the heads of the disciples. Jesus sees other people behind, above, beyond Thomas. He's talking to us. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

We need to be more like Thomas and less like his friends. We have to take Jesus at his word. We can't hide behind doors locked by our fears. Within walls of comfort, familiarity, tradition. We have to put discipleship to all the tests of life in this world. Seek understanding. Never quit the quest for God's truth.

Sitting behind closed doors, waiting for truth to dawn, is a luxury granted just once. To 10 men, for one day, almost 2,000 years ago.

Truth finally burst through their defences and gave them a gift. The Spirit of God. Authorized them to do something. Forgive sins. So they could go out into the world. Be his presence and power in the world.

The world where Thomas spent that first Easter Day. And found to be a desolate place without Jesus. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.*

## 166<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION KNOX COLLEGE

Join us at Convocation Hall on Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.  
Convocation Address by

**Dr. Don Posterski**  
**"Sustainable Faith in Fragile Times"**

A Pre-Convocation Workshop on Social Justice  
led by Dr. Posterski will also be held  
from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Principal's Reunion Year Dinner: Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**  
For Knox/Ewart Grads of 1970, 1960, 1950 and prior

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# Raise Up the Locals

LESSONS LEARNED FROM A RURAL MINISTRIES CONFERENCE. **BY CHARLES MCNEIL**

**I** WAS DRIVING to Lloydminster, which straddles the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan, to attend a rural ministry conference. The conference's official title was Rooted in Faith: Celebrating Rural Churches in Community. The conference's aim was to reclaim and revitalize rural communities. Rolling into conferences you size up things and the people you'll be rubbing shoulders with. We had the preliminaries the first night, the usual wine and cheese. And then the stories began to flow.

I got talking to an Anglican priest who told me how a little, feisty Anglican congregation was acting as Christ in their community. They moved out from behind the walls

of their building and their church relationships to meet a variety of needs in the community. This small church was so busy doing the gospel that they couldn't afford, and didn't seem to need, full-time ordained leadership. They had an ordained someone working part-time. Apparently the structures of Anglicanism looked upon this congregation with a somewhat predatory view. Since they couldn't afford or even want the full-time ordained minister, they were considered less than worthy. They could have been on some list somewhere that had them threatened with closure. My Anglican storyteller made it very clear she'd advocated for them. I'm not sure what "advocated" means but it sounded like a good thing. We closed the conversation

hoping that the congregation would be left alone to do its work.

I was chewing on some cheese and digesting a number of conversations when I bumped into a fellow cheese lover. A teacher and pastor, Rev. Dr. Someone-or-other. Like many in rural areas, the Rev. Dr. had two jobs. She did some part-time work in a prairie city but her passion and pleasure came from her work with small rural congregations.

According to the Rev. Dr., the sacred cows of the theology and practice of the institutional church have to change! The prevailing thinking and practice of seminary-trained ministers is failing the needs of rural mission and ministry. "Raise up locals to do ministry and mission. Train them where they are at with ►



fully adequate resources to do whatever God calls them to do. Set them free to do God's work where they are." I chuckled as I listened because word for word I heard echoes of the passion and perceptiveness of others working in rural ministry.

For some of the conference we sat at tables in the main meeting room. There we were fed in a number of ways. Across the table sat a fellow Presbyterian working within the United Church. We connected through stories. "Sadie" ministered for our denomination, eventually married a local guy, and has since gone onto other things. She told a story about herself.

**"Those city guys don't get us farmers and town folk! Yeah, they don't listen very well either. Never hear what we have to say!"**

In the far off days of appointed summer student mission fields, a particular place got a bad name. The student previous to Sadie had found the place intolerable. The next year Sadie was appointed there, and she went out with an open mind. It turned out that the accommodation came complete with an outhouse that rocked in

the wind because its eaves were caught in the boughs of a tree. "The roof of the house leaked and the only running water in the place came when it rained." It did have electricity, which was a shock to local visitors.

But the heart of the community was what she remembered. A community youth group that the Presbyterians oversaw took the town by storm. It ministered to the participants from all faith backgrounds and none. It took Christ to the town and rural area! The young people raised their own money and taught the Christian life to their elders and the community.

Farmers and others in rural areas share a clear picture of the presbytery. "Those city guys don't get us farmers and town folk! Yeah, they don't listen very well either. Never hear what we have to say! The only time they want to come out to the country churches are for either seeding or harvest when we have no time to spare. It is always further to drive from the city to here than here to the city."

Funny, the city ministers and representative elders said the same sort of things about the country folk.

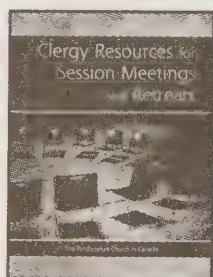
During the conference, there were a couple of times that the theme really got to me. One of those times was when the speaker talked about "place," needing to teach the uninitiated newcomer. In my early experience, I found myself foolishly assuming that I knew best. After all, I thought, I am the one to teach, what do the locals have to teach me? Upon reflection I am beginning to ask, am I too arrogant to be taught?

And more than all this, as a pastor am I open to God and God's peculiar people loving me? Or am I insulating myself from God and the locals?

"Hmm—isn't that a caution," as my prayerful Grandmother McNeil was wont to have said! ■

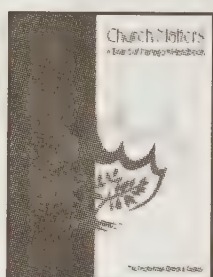
*Rev. Charles McNeil is a member of the Cariboo ministries in B.C.*

## Three New Resources Available



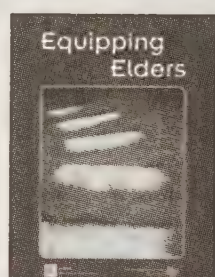
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# The New Jerusalem

SO THIS IS GOD. BY GRAHAM GLADWELL

**W**e had just been celebrating my 90th birthday. I sat down in my easy chair and felt faint, and all at once my heart stopped and I was gone. I slipped out of the house and found myself on some kind of sledge or surfboard suspended in the air. As I got accustomed to this, I began to move, first slowly, and then faster. I looked around and saw that I was not alone.

There were others, many others, all on surfboards, some sleek, some heavy and unwieldy. I looked down and saw

that all my clothes had gone. In their place was a light robe. I looked up and saw in the distance a shiny panorama, what seemed like a city, surrounded by a wall, with minarets, steeples and domes, shining without the aid of the sun. We all seemed to be drawn to it.

I could now make out hundreds of white-robed beings who all seemed to be converging on the city. The landscape under us was beautiful, but it paled in comparison to the shining city ahead; the trees that I thought so majestic looked crooked and diseased, the people down there

**The landscape under us was beautiful, but it paled in comparison to the shining city ahead**

that I once admired looked hollow, and their accomplishments that once amazed me seemed puny. Was I racing back in time, or forward? Time seemed senseless. ➤



I looked around me and saw that all of us beings were beginning to communicate with each other, and doing so without language, and without any of the barriers we knew on Earth. Wasn't that Mother Theresa over there? She seems to have teamed up with John Knox. What a wonderful sight! Isn't that Rembrandt? He's deep in conversation with Van Gogh, and he's throwing away paintings because they are starting to look cheap in the light of the city. Van Gogh is throwing away his, also. Both of them are gazing at the city—and it's getting nearer and nearer. It has gates in the walls, and it is awesome. But that word is trite.

And suddenly I find that I could not remember what "trite" meant. I was losing English, the language I held onto all my life. And in its place

was a new sound in my head. Was this the language of the new city? My inhibitions were disappearing. At last I could speak without first introducing myself. And my sledge had gone. Where was up and down? Left and right?

We must be in at least four-dimensional space. Or is space nonsense here? Then I began to see that the memories I had of Earth were just shadows of what was here. Here was a real river bordered by real trees, and I could be in the water, on the bank, in the trees, and this all at the same time. So Einstein is wrong here! He thought that he had arrived at truth, but now I see that it is all mere scribbles.

All this time—nonsense again—we were being drawn into the centre of the city. And I saw that there was a great crowd—10,000 times 10,000—and in

their midst a wonderful radiance. I tried to describe it, but all the shadow words failed—honey, amber, kindness, laser, fluorescent, purity, diamond, g-sharp, 256 million, unicorn. And we were all singing, and I could sing all four parts—but it seemed like 40 parts—and numbers seemed to be failing too. I was lost, or is it that I am found? We were all together here, and my English reserve was gone, class and creed and colour. Why had I ever given these things any thought? And everything here is always moving! Why did I ever think that heaven was static? The mind I had on Earth was a mere shadow of what we have now. So this is God! And these must be the redeemed from every tribe and language and race. Hallelujah! ■

*Graham Gladwell lives in Elmira, Ont.*

# There's a Whole Other Magazine Online.

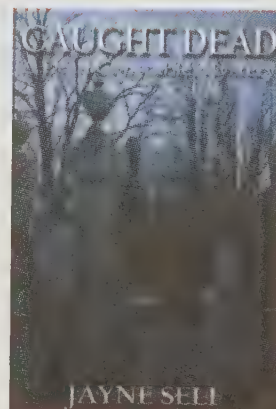
Sometimes congregational life can be murder.

**Caught Dead:**

**A Dean Constable Mystery**

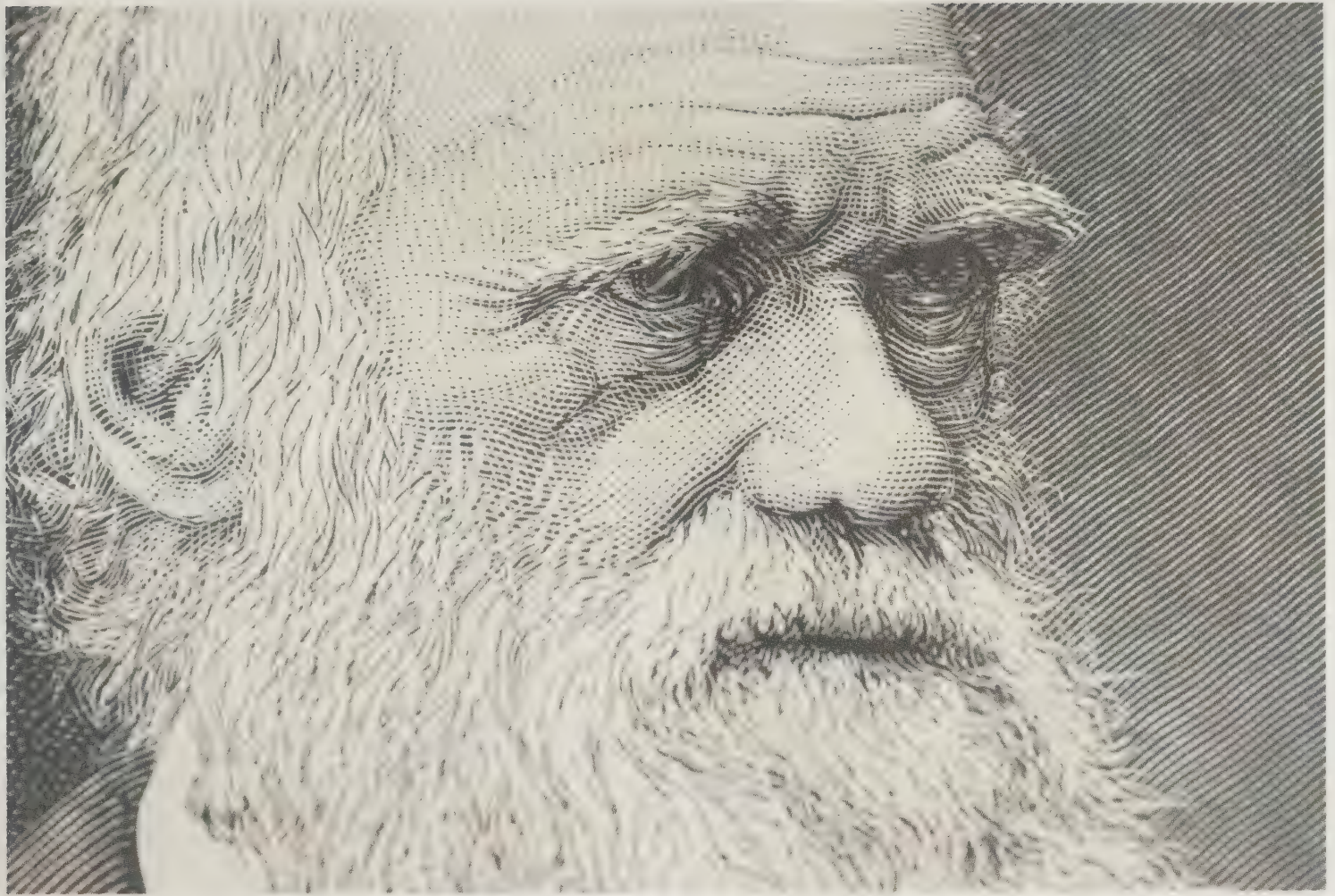
*By Jayne Self*

The mystery begins April 5. A new chapter every week.



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# Laws and Motions

ADDRESSING DARWIN'S THEORY AND BELIEFS. BY CALVIN BROWN

**PARTLY** in honour of Charles Darwin's 200th anniversary, the movie *Creation* has recently been made available in North America. I suspect there will be many who use the occasion to re-examine Darwin's work and theories. Personally, my first encounter with Darwin's evolutionary theory was in high school and this encounter led to a mild crisis of faith. The issue for me wasn't about any particular detail of his theory; but that the theory was put in the context of believing the truth of the Holy Bible or Darwin's theory.

Some members of the Presbyterian church I attended saw it as a clear choice between choosing the literal truth given by revelation from God through the prophet Moses, or some false secular teaching that was the result of man's vanity.

On the other hand, the school's assumed position was to accept the modern scientific "proof" of evolution as undisputed truth, and those who even questioned it were considered fools and ignoramuses. Although they called evolution a theory, which means

it is an hypothesis (and unproven), it was always accepted as scientific fact (which is a proven scientific truth). The problem was that the dictionaries themselves give definitions of "theory" that are nearly contradictory. What was a student to believe? In the end I concluded that no one made a convincing case that disproved the other.

I knew and experienced life with God so I concluded that all that was theologically required in this matter was that I believe that God was Creator. Whether God's means of creation ►





## Darwin himself was somewhat conflicted. One of the personal things in Darwin's life that led him to scepticism was the death of his 10-year-old daughter, Annie

was slow, as in evolution, or quick, as in the big bang theory, could be left to better scientific minds to sort through. This compromise view worked for me for many years and even as a young pastor giving advice to students, this answer seemed to work.

Although I knew some scientists felt that evolution somehow disproved God, the fact that some Nobel Prize-winning scientists stood as believers in God the Creator, even though they

also believed in the evolutionary process, only reinforced my view that the middle way was the best way to avoid needless and seemingly irresolvable controversy. As long as evolution was thought of as merely descriptive of the means, the middle way seemed to be the way to go.

But when I discovered that for some it was not merely a description of the means that creatures change and adapt but was used to promote a philosophy of life and a worldview that was distinct and contrary to any idea of being the work of a Creator, I was concerned. When the issue changes from a matter of biology to a matter of theology then the whole understanding of science also changes. It transforms from discovering God's thoughts to promoting the thought that there was no Creator but only a random process. If this philosophical Darwinism is true then life is without purpose and worship is idiotic and this must be vigorously rejected.

If various proponents of Darwinism in its various forms seem uncertain of what the conclusions prove, no doubt it was because I think Darwin himself was somewhat conflicted. One of the personal things in Darwin's life that led him to scepticism was the death of his 10-year-old daughter, Annie. He had pleaded with God to spare her and promised to commit his life wholeheartedly to God if she was spared. This however, was not God's purpose and the girl died. Afterward, Darwin was never the same. This disappointment in God may have led to unnecessary conclusions by some that there is no God. Perhaps, in fact, creation and evolution do not need to be an either/or proposition.

I suspect for Darwin himself the seemingly inextricable relationship between the biological and theological factors was painful. The film, based on research from personal family correspondence, makes this clear since the family was torn theologically. His wife, Emma, was a devout Christian who believed the only way to heaven was

to trust in God. Charles was at best a sceptic as the following excerpt makes clear. Randal Keynes, Darwin's great-great-grandson, wrote the book upon which the movie is based. He told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, "My great-grandfather was agnostic. Some of [his family] were Christian. Some [were] were agnostic. None were atheists."

In the *Origin of Species*, Darwin acknowledges a Creator. He writes of his theory: "There is grandeur in this view of life with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one."

There will no doubt be renewed discussion and much acrimony around the topic, which may stir up hurtful old controversies. That, I suppose, will at least prove that whatever you think about evolution affecting various parts of creation, it hasn't much affected the wickedness and pride of the human heart. Let us pray that the black hood of prejudice will not cover the head of science and that the blindfold of ignorance will not keep out the light of discovery from the eyes of faith. John Calvin, our theological forefather, did not see science as necessarily opposed to faith. It is right and proper, Calvin maintains, to study the laws and motions of the heavenly bodies.

Astronomy leads to the praise of God's wisdom and majesty. God is sovereign in His gifts and not bound to any necessity of nature. He has foreordained all things by His eternal decree. He also said: Knowledge of the sciences is so much smoke apart from the heavenly science of Christ.

May we, Calvin's descendents, also ask the Spirit of truth to lead us into the wisdom that gives glory to God and in humility stand in amazement at all He has made and the way He has made it, whatever we believe the process to have been. ■

*Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC—[renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca](http://renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca).*





# Hungarian Community

AN OLD CHURCH GETS A MAKEOVER. **BY CONNIE PURVIS**

**T**he whole three year project—everything—every single thing we’re trying to do has something to do with the community. So finally, when we put out the sign saying ‘all welcome’ we’ll mean it,” said Rev. Dr. Maria Lallouet, minister of the rechristened Community Church in Welland, Ont.

In November 2008, with the blessing of Niagara presbytery, the congregation discarded their former name—Hungarian—and became Community. It was the beginning of an ambi-

tious three-year “church makeover” which started with renovations to the sanctuary, to be followed by the fellowship hall, kitchen and church grounds. The changes are intended to make the 1960s-era building more useful for community groups, bands, choirs and organizations. But Lallouet says the physical inside-out transformation began with a spiritual one.

The Hungarian congregation was founded in 1927 at a time when immigration rates were high and newcomers created self-contained communities. Following World War I, large numbers of Hungarian immigrants moved to

“So finally, when we put out the sign saying ‘all welcome’ we’ll mean it”

Welland hoping to work on canal construction or in other local industries. Subsequent waves of immigrants following World War II and the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 joined the growing community. By the 1960s, 20 per cent of Welland’s population was Hungarian.

But Hungarian immigration has ➤



## Spiritual gift inventories revealed strong gifts of hospitality among members of the congregation

dropped off in intervening decades, and many newcomers try to learn English as quickly as possible to integrate into the community. Although the church offers an English service each week, non-Hungarian residents did not think of coming to a Hungarian church, Lallouet said.

The church is located in an older and poorer region of the city—an area hard-hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs in the region.

She noted that the congregation was aging and many active members were growing tired. “We needed to grab something that would give people strength to feel that yes, there is a need in the community for this church and yes, we can help the community if we do these changes—if we change ourselves. So the first change is to the inside—not just to the building, but also to people’s hearts.”

Spiritual gift inventories revealed strong gifts of hospitality among members of the congregation. They hope to translate this into a weekly “meet and eat” program that will run on week-

days. Homemade meals will be served in the hall, and diners are welcome to pay what they feel is appropriate, or what they can afford.

“I think we, as a church, made a huge mistake by sending people away to soup kitchens to eat. Jesus never did that. One of the favourite words of Jesus was ‘come.’ So that’s what we are trying to do—create a place where people can come.”

Jim Szeplaki, clerk of session, recognized the difficulties that the program could pose. “I’m not sure if anyone is willing to cater without receiving payment—or much of it—and the idea of having all races and walks of people join together for food sounds great, but getting the exposure to make it successful will be difficult.” Nonetheless, he said the ideas behind the makeover are good and the congregation is unified in its support for the project.

He is particularly fond of a fountain installed near the front of the sanctuary. It is part of a small spirituality centre, a space set aside for quiet meditation, reflection and prayer. Szeplaki said

he would like to see it become a prayer pond complete with fish and lilies.

In 2010, the congregation hopes to create a memorial garden on their one-acre lot. Plans for it include a labyrinth, benches, a mural painted by local high school students, and an area to serve tea and coffee during the summer months.

Among other dreams for the future, Lallouet would like to see the church host a Christian music festival and become a home for community choirs and bands.

The plan is ambitious and money is uncertain, she admits, but she believes “the money will follow the mission.” Letters to local businesses have yielded donations of paint and other supplies, and fundraising events have helped cover costs.

“If we do this we could change the whole community, and if we don’t do this we die,” she said. “So we will offer the beautiful place we have to the community.” ■

*Connie Purvis is the Record’s staff writer.*

## The Messy Table

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on parenting *By Katie Munnik*

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# Schooling the Roma

AND HELPING HUNGARIANS TO THRIVE IN UKRAINE. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

**"T**hey are my people," David Pandy told the *Record* while on furlough in Canada, of the Ukrainian Roma or gypsies with whom he works. "I thought, if I have talents to help them come around, to get an education, maybe I should be doing something."

David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres have worked in East-Central Europe through the Presbyterian Church's International Ministries for a decade; and for several years before that through the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. As missionaries, their task is to bring education to Roma children, where the emphasis is on establishing a relationship based on Christian love and tolerance, and to ethnic Hungarians who have slowly seen their language, culture and land disappear during years of persecution.

Today, not only can children get an education in their native Hungarian, they can do it in a Christian environment—a first made possible by Anna who began the first Hungarian Reformed Christian secondary school in Ukraine—and most likely in the entire former Soviet Union—back in 1993.

"For me, it is a big blessing to see my former students return and occupy the position of teacher, doctor, pastor," said Anna, who, with David, has three children.

When the Iron Curtain fell in 1991, Ukraine was hurled into disaster mode. The currency was worth almost nothing; money from the banks mysteriously disappeared. "People were unable to pay for electricity, gas, or clothing. But it was, and is, a rich agricultural area, so people grew their own food," said Da-

vid, who grew up in the West, though his parents are from Hungary. He notes that his salary at that time was a mere \$14 a month. Today, each of the four Christian schools overseen by David has a farm attached to provide food for students and staff.

But the area's ills persist. David said the government is not functioning effectively, reforms are slow and unemployment is high. Kiev, the capital, is the only area to show any prosperity. "It's typical," he said. "There's a layer of the extremely wealthy, and the rest don't have much."

The four secondary schools run by the Pandys (plus an elementary school for the Roma) have about 100 students each. They also run a missionary training school. David said most of the graduates go on to university and some return to the sub-Carpathian Ukraine (an area repeatedly annexed to various European countries over the last century and whose population now stands at about 1.3 million—150,000 of whom are ethnic Hungarians), as doctors, lawyers, teachers and engineers. Some of them work in the Hungarian Reformed Church as pastors and catechism teachers.

"The idea is to build up the church," said David, whose official titles are supervisor of missions and general director of schools. "But there are problems. Even if they graduate, there are often few employment opportunities in sub-Carpathian Ukraine. The church tries to do a lot, but it can't do everything."



The Pandy-Szekeres family are PCC missionaries.

Many ethnic Hungarians live in Ukraine in what was once Hungarian territory. Persecution was rampant for decades and, according to Pandy, inequalities still exist. It is for this reason that the Pandys, as well as the Hungarian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church of the sub-Carpathian Ukraine, are working hard to help.

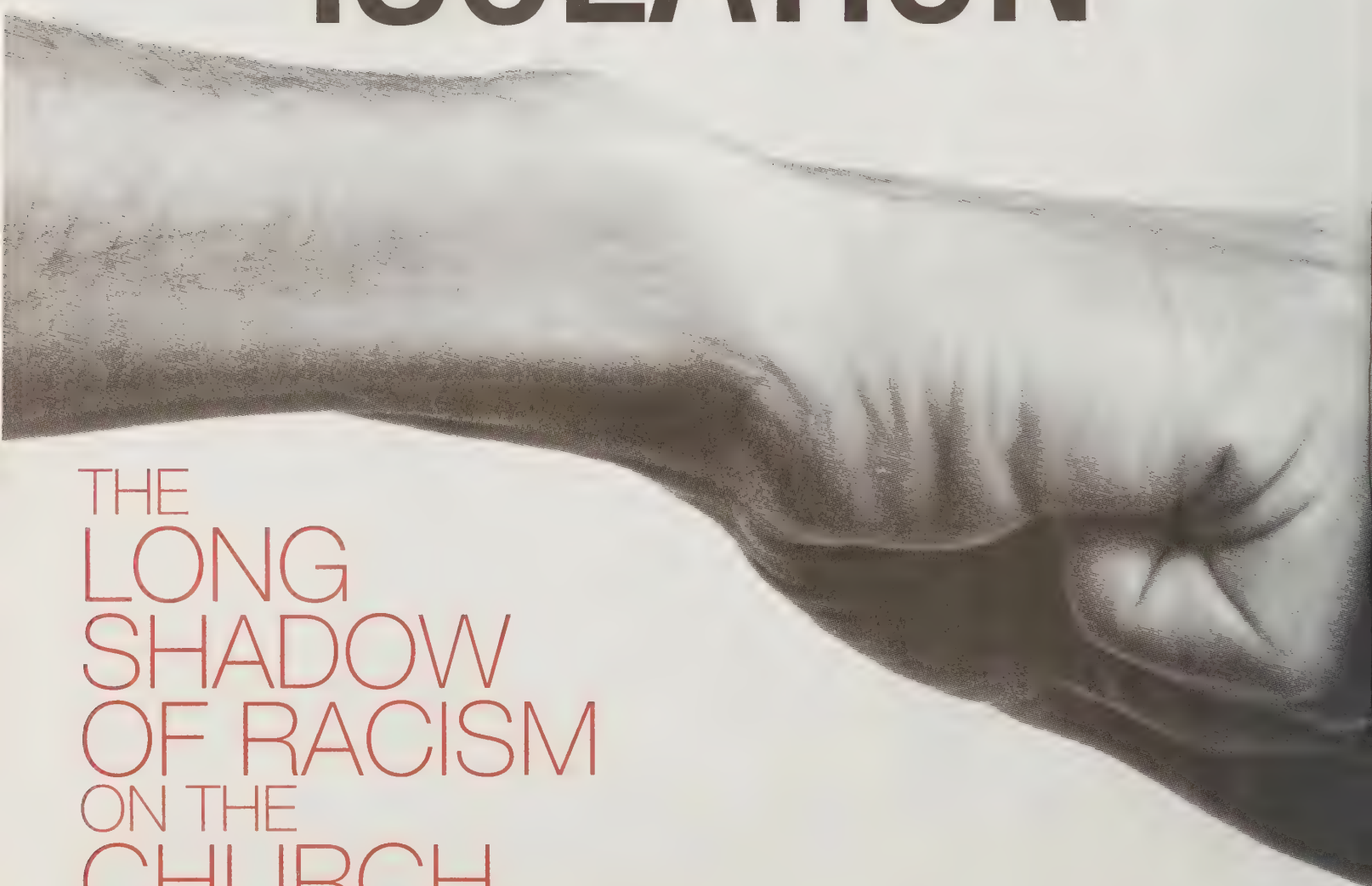
"Hungarian people are an ethnic minority in a large country that is fighting the odds just to survive," he said, noting that Ukraine's population has dropped from about 52 million to 47 million in just a few years. "People don't perceive themselves as having a future."

"One of my principle goals is to make myself, or the work that I do, redundant," said David, "because this will mean that the institutions we established are strong enough to stand by themselves and continue to provide the services they were called to do. It will be a good sign that my purpose for having accepted God's call will have made a difference." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record's* senior writer.



# ETHNICITY, IDENTITY & ISOLATION



THE  
LONG  
SHADOW  
OF RACISM  
ON THE  
CHURCH

BY ANDREW FAIZ

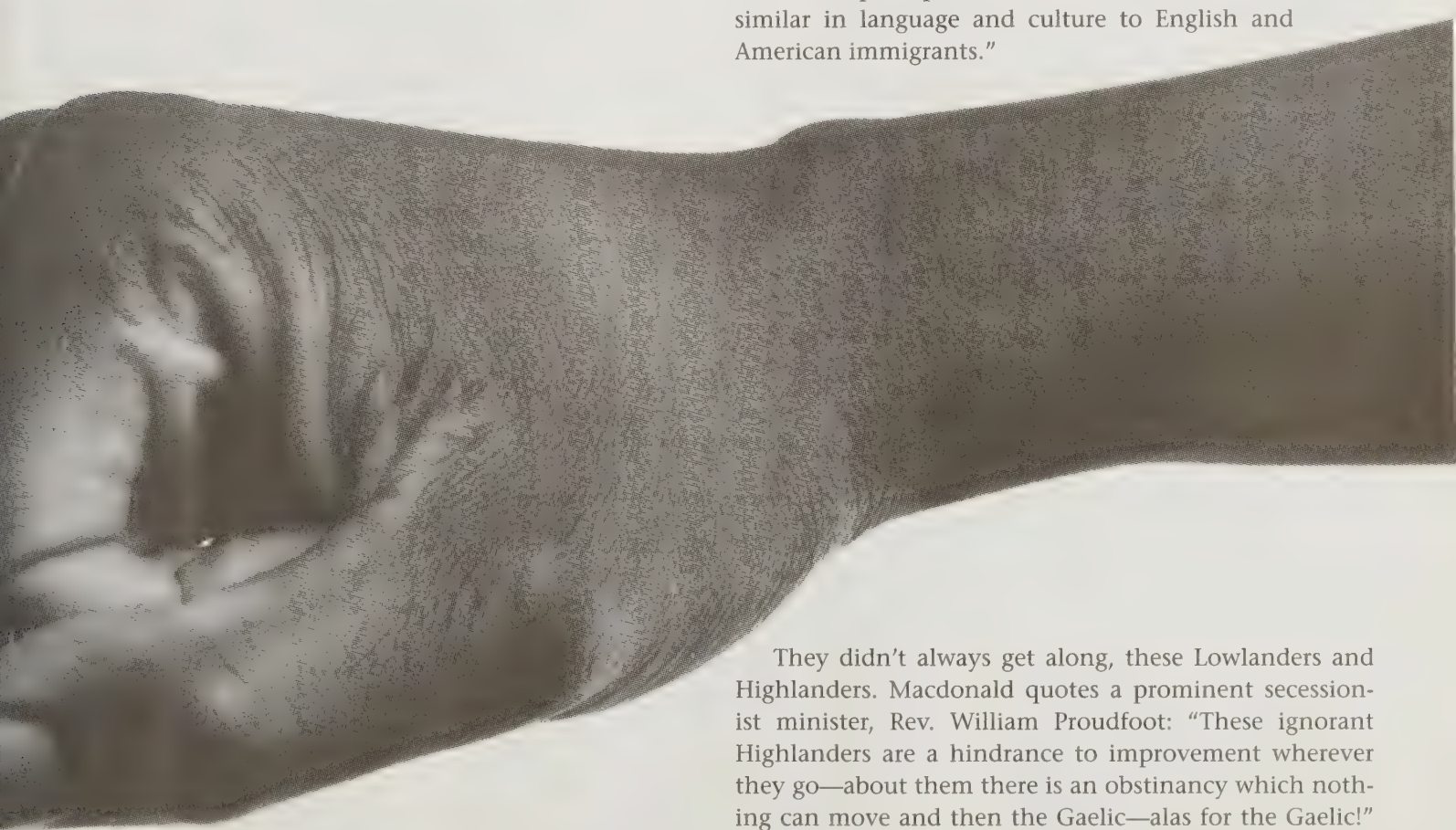


Canadians seem to have forgotten that multiculturalism didn't begin with Pierre Trudeau. He extended policies begun by Lester B. Pearson and opened wide the immigration doors to non-Europeans like myself (I arrived in Canada from Pakistan in 1971). The heavy infusion of pigment into the Canadian cultural landscape has forced our nation to look at ethnicity and culture in significantly different ways. It has forced us to give it names—multiculturalism being the most benign; postmodernism, the most baffling—and to create public policies and funding streams. But a century ago, when Canadian multiculturalism was often a matter of white on white, of determining the not-so-subtle differences between Finns and Scots, for example, this country was rife with racial prejudice, cultural strife and the battle for identity.

Those are also known in the world of church as “the good old days,” before our identities got confused and we had to share space with folks (like me) who do not share primary cultural

assumptions. So, it is only fitting to challenge the ethnic and cultural identities within the Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, professor of church and society at Knox College, Toronto, is an affable fellow. His once bright red hair that spoke of his Scottish heritage is fading to a more neutral colour. One look at him and it would be hard to believe him a subversive, but through his research (published in a chapter in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, University of Toronto Press) he turns upside down the imagined identity of the Presbyterian Church. “The origins of [the PCC] were largely American. [They] brought a particular kind of evangelical and revivalistic faith to these areas ...” Next came a wave of Scots—but, Macdonald cautions the reader to not be too general in using that phrase: “Most Scottish Presbyterian immigrants to British North America were Lowlanders, people who came from the more fertile southern regions of north Britain ... Lowland immigration is often overshadowed by the emigration of Highland Scots, perhaps because Lowlanders were more similar in language and culture to English and American immigrants.”



They didn't always get along, these Lowlanders and Highlanders. Macdonald quotes a prominent secessionist minister, Rev. William Proudfoot: “These ignorant Highlanders are a hindrance to improvement wherever they go—about them there is an obstinacy which nothing can move and then the Gaelic—alas for the Gaelic!” While these two groups wrangled with each other, Macdonald notes another important body of islanders that travelled to the new world. “The Irish, largely (though ➤



not exclusively) from Northern Ireland, comprised a significant group, establishing congregations. ... In Kingston, Ont., there was an Irish Presbyterian church alongside two ethnically Scottish churches, and Cooke's church in Toronto was also an ethnically Irish church." The pattern of ethnic separation is set early, based as much on the comfort of the incoming immigrants as it is on the prejudice of those already in Canada. The church, then, inadvertently becomes the house of ethnic identity.

As it turns out, the Highland Scots win the battle for identity within the burgeoning church. And even though by the early 1960s most Presbyterians are born in Canada, in the long tradition of immigration, subsequent generations invent new traditions to assert their heritage. "These celebrations would include Robbie Burns suppers, Tartan Sundays, and the celebration of 'Kirkin of the Tartans,'" writes Macdonald. The last of these was the invention of the Scottish-American minister Peter Marshall during the Second World War. It is a curious mixture of tribal colours (known as tartans), bagpipes, God Save the Queen, tartan covered Bibles and the national anthem.

With this subsequent assertion of the Scots identity, other ethnicities—Dutch, American Revivalist, Northern Irish, Korean, French, Hungarian—that contributed to the Presbyterian Church get squeezed out, even though some of them had tens of thousands of members. They either formed their own denominations or isolated congregations within this denomination. And while many of those congregations have today a proud legacy for their members and families, they have existed alone—one might go so far as to say lonely—within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This is a quick history of this denomination's ethnic identity, which casts a long shadow through to today.

Rev. In Kee Kim was a reluctant convert to the Han-Ca presbyteries; but once converted he led the charge in the mid-1990s to have two Korean-speaking presbyteries initiated within the polity and structure of the Presbyterian Church. Kim, who is minister at St. Timothy, Toronto—which is one of the larger congregations in the denomination and is profiled in Macdonald's chapter—was born in Korea. As an immigrant and as a minister, he wanted very much to find a balance between his birth and his adopted culture. But he came to believe that Korean Presbyterians could secure their voice only by having a separate-but-equal structure within the denomination. It was a matter of self-preservation.

By the mid-1980s, Koreans were the largest visible

minority within the Presbyterian Church. Though the first Korean-speaking church within the denomination had been established in 1965, there was heavy immigration of Koreans to Canada a decade later. By 1999, there were about 250 Korean-speaking congregations in Canada; but only a fifth of them were linked to an established denomination. The rest were largely independent. As Kim explained in an article in the May 2009 *Record*, the largest Protestant denomination in Korea is Presbyterian, within which category are many other denominations. The largest Presbyterian church in the world is in Seoul.

But despite their numbers, the Koreans weren't seen to have a voice within the church. (This is what led Kim and others to lead the charge for the Han-Ca presbyteries.) Some would call this racism. I call it institutional indolence. It's not that the church doesn't want to be inclusive and it's not as if the church doesn't know what the right thing is to do; it's just that the church doesn't know how to go about being inclusive, given the established structure, the traditional short-hands, the smug tribalism, the comfortable pews. In other words, it is not a matter of racism—an active hatred—but of laziness, a comfort in doing things the way things have always been done. (This theme of tradition versus change

was the differentially muted clarion call of Rev. Cheol Soon Park, moderator of the 2008 General Assembly. His pastoral voice was likely the first contact many Presbyterians have had with the Koreans in their midst.)

And if the very large Korean population within the denomination cannot crack the well established, traditional Highlander identity, what hope do the other ethnic cultures have? The answer is self-evident. I witness this every month as managing editor of this publication. In my five and a half years here, we have never received a People and Places or other submission from the Ghanaian churches in Toronto and Montreal, both of which are amongst the largest churches in the denomination. I don't mean to pick on the Ghanaians—I could easily choose the Chinese, the Koreans, the Hungarians, and many others. I sense they do not feel a sense of ownership within the church. That is, they think of themselves mostly as ethnic congregations and not as full members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Conversely, there are congregations which send us submissions because their choir got new robes—they feel such a strong sense of ownership within the denomination that they want to share every bit of congregational news. That's great; since this publication is a monitor of the denomi-

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national voice, the more engagement the better. But there are some deafening silences within the national choir. And only by listening for those silences can we identify the missing voices: they are mostly the ethnic congregations, but they also include our rural and western members and our more evangelical churches.

The barrier to greater involvement and engagement seems to be a perceived identity—Highland Scots. But, Macdonald argues that the Presbyterian Church is ethnically Canadian. He further argues that identity is constructed. It is a self-creation. Let me take his points a bit further: to be an ethnic Canadian, that is, somebody born in Canada, is to choose one's own identity. Identity in the Canadian context is a totally malleable thing; this is Postmodernist Studies 101. My face may hint at my Pakistani birth, but Pakistan was a construct less than 15 years old when I was born. I haven't lived there in 40 years, I barely speak any of the native languages, I don't know the slang, and I don't know the hidden cultural references, those subtle markers and shortcuts by which people live and negotiate daily activity. I am a Canadian—I speak the language of this country. And within that context, I am a Canadian Presbyterian.

But even though I have been a member of the PCC since I arrived in Canada, even though I have been an elder of the church for about a quarter century, even though I went to church camps in my youth (Stuart Macdonald was my counselor), even though I have worked for the church at various stages in my life, even though I have a fairly prominent position within the church today and even though I speak with an authoritative voice of "Our Church," I don't feel—I emphasize that word—wholly comfortable. I am willing to admit the problem may be of my perception. But I had a very curious experience two years ago this month when I was at a weekend conference at Crieff Hills, outside

of Guelph, Ont., of "ethnic and racial minority Presbyterians." I felt I belonged. I belonged in that room of ethnically diverse people—people like me.

With nary a hint of a Highlander, with only active ethnic elders and members from across Canada, there was a freedom of conversation and recognition felt by all the participants. We all belonged there; we weren't poaching on somebody else's turf, ingratiating ourselves into somebody else's church. It was a very strange and powerful sensation; and by the end of the first day we all wanted to rush straight from the meeting space to the nearest General Assembly and declare in one loud voice that we were tired of feeling like second-rate citizens within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

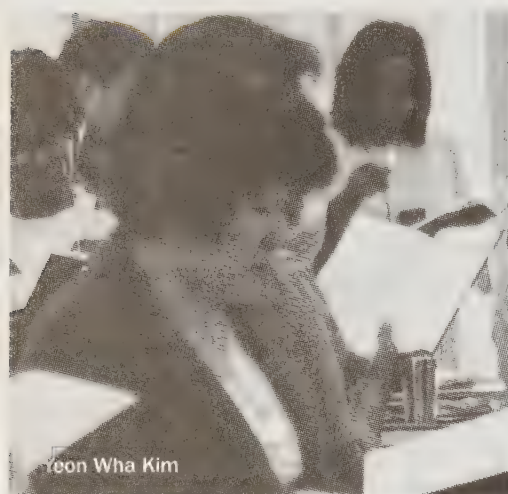
This should have come as no surprise, and for two reasons. This was the first time for all of us to be in the midst of such a gathering of the like-pigmented. And secondly, Rev. Paulette Brown gave the keynote address the first night. She can do that to people.

**I first met Paulette** about 15 years ago when I profiled her for a CBC radio broadcast. (It can still be found on the CBC website.) She has since become my congregational minister at Gateway Community Church, Toronto. Then she was minister at a Presbyterian church in the notorious Jane-Finch neighbourhood in Toronto. Jamaican by birth, she had studied economics and Spanish in university and found her calling several years after arriving in Canada. She went to Knox College in the 1980s and found it a strange and unwelcoming environment. She recently told me that at the end of a week of school she needed to speak in her heaviest patois to a friend back in Jamaica. That is, after a week of feeling extremely estranged, she needed to touch base with her birthroots. (By many accounts our colleges ➤

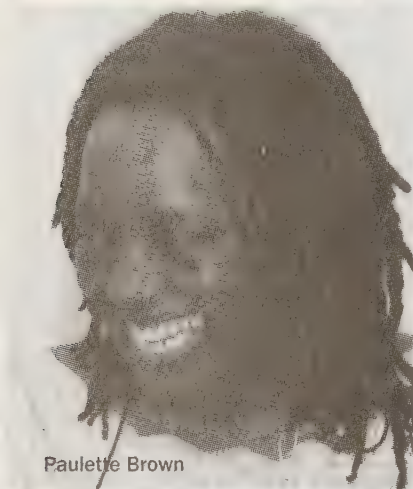
A diverse group at the Forum for Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the PCC, held at Crieff Hills in April 2008. It was organized by the church's Justice Ministries department.



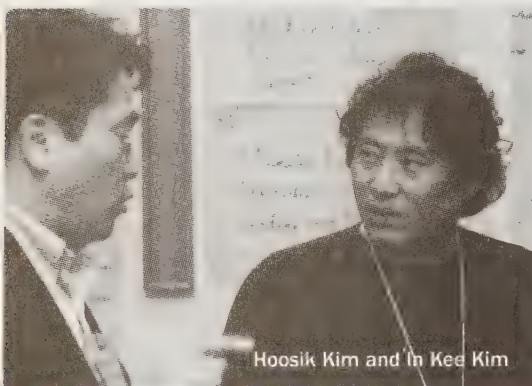




Yeon Wha Kim



Paulette Brown



Hoosik Kim and In Kee Kim



John Corbett

have learned from the experiences of Paulette Brown and others.)

Similar stories were told at the Crieff Hills retreat, feeling as if there was an active collusion to dissuade pigmented folk from participating in the church. "No meaningful changes can be made without dealing with the structures," Brown told the gathering on Friday night. "We must focus on where the power is concentrated in our church, who sits at the table of power and authority, influencing how decisions concerning the overall ministry of the church are interpreted and implemented. We must ask whether there are spaces at these tables that reflect the true diversity of the church's racial and ethnic makeup. We must raise questions about ways in which we can support the church in hammering out its journey with God within the context of the general 'culture of sameness' that characterizes its executive offices and its educational institutions."

Powerful stuff, and it rang loud bells for action within every faithful, lonely, Presbyterian heart in the room. No wonder we were riled up for action that night. There were excellent workshops the next day, but Brown's words still rang inside of us. By Saturday night we were calmer in our mood and tone—what is this general culture of sameness? It is amorphous. Like the wind, we feel it but we can't touch it. We don't know where to apply pressure to push it away, to overturn it. What exactly were we asking for?

After reading an earlier draft of this article, Macdonald wrote this to me: "I think in recent years some Canadians have been very glad to have the Scots ethnicity so prominent, because we can then blame the failings of the denomination and its fate on them. We are a Canadian denomination. But, if we're not doing too well it's easy to blame that failure on one ethnicity or the fact that we're tied too closely to them. So, if I had any solution I wanted to offer it would be this—recognize that we are a Canadian denomination and give fair space to the multiplicity of the denomination."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada today is no more really Scottish than it ever was. It is, as always, an ethnically diverse denomination; but with a patina of Highlander. And that's all it is, or ever has been. A thin layer of manufactured identity that can easily be reconstructed, redrawn, but hasn't always been. It all comes back to the comfort zones, the traditions, the status quo. This theme reverberates through the denomination, as recent articles in this magazine have shown—from issues of depression or rural ministry, the barrier seems to be neither theology nor polity but that our very traditions have become ossified. We've lost their meaning and we seem incapable for a variety of reasons to refresh them for our times.

And my former camp counselor is correct—demonizing Scots is a form of reverse-racism. It's too easy; and worse, it doesn't work. Let them be proud of their heritage; and they have much to be proud of having, according to one account, invented the modern world. (Perhaps we need to import the Presbyterians who invented the post-modern world.) There is plenty of room for a multiplicity of cultural and ethnic traditions to be celebrated.

But it seems to me that ethnicity is the wrong brand for a denomination or a congregation. In feeling usurped or rejected, many feel compelled to preserve their heritage and we the church have let them do so as long as they pay their membership dues. But isn't an honest desire to walk with Christ meant to be the cost of membership, instead of skin colour and the ability to roll R's? It's a naïve question and I'll leave it at that.

**Naivety aside**, our ethnicities do matter. They are important, as is our faith. The two become conflated; and we call that tradition. So, what can we do? Many things. I think everybody should make an effort, at least once every two years, to go to an ethnic worship near you. If it happens to be Presbyterian, so much the better. My favourite is the Ghanaian: it's the same liturgy, in English, but by the time most of us are rushing to our cars to leave the church grounds, the Ghanaians haven't even finished the lectionary readings. The worship





is over three hours long, feels shorter than most worship experiences and is absolutely energizing. Experience their joy in being at church and with each other; experience their hospitality, the way you are greeted half a dozen times by the time you get to a pew; learn of another way of experiencing God. Make certain to join the line of dancers during the offertory. You may not feel comfortable doing that the first few times you go, but once you've done it, you'll be undone forever.

Go to a Korean worship. You may find its tone closer to your own comfort zone and there are many services in English. Listen closely to the voice of God speaking to you through that community. There are Presbyterians worshipping in many different languages, from many different ethnic traditions, within a driving distance from your church. Go join them in worship. Just do that and you will be transformed. Once that happens to you, the rest will follow.

Look at who is sitting beside you in your own pews. They are the new pioneers, like your ancestors, hewing their futures by working below their expectations and education just to make ends meet. They

need you to be a part of their family, to know that somebody in this strange new country is praying with them. They are also amongst the estimated 75 million Reformed

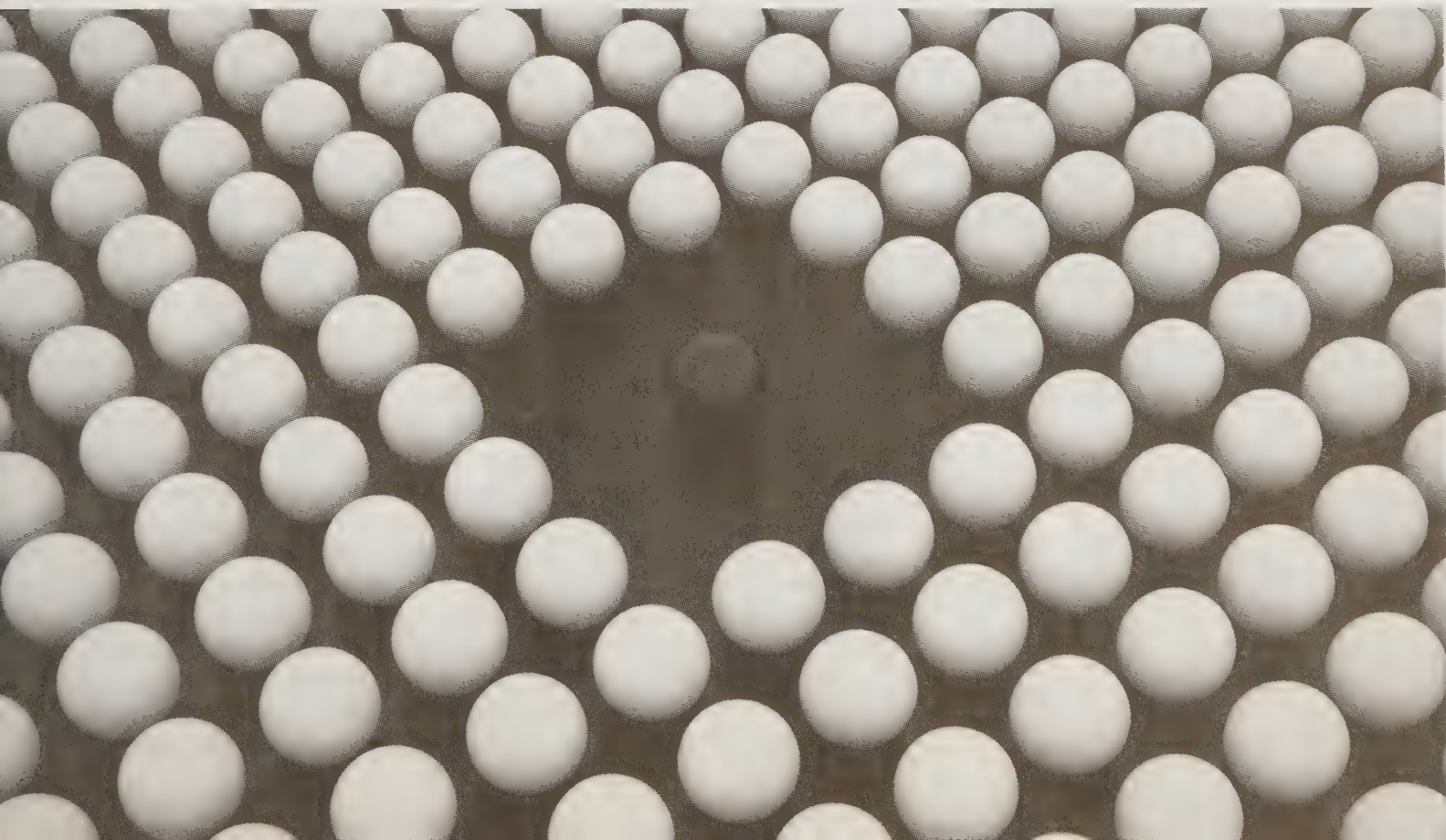
Christians worldwide—they have come from an exciting if different Presbyterian culture. When they are comfortable enough (your friendship will help), ask them to bring their traditions to worship. We all have as much to learn as we have to teach. Both roles are equally important.

One of the most memorable experiences for me was at the 2008 assembly when Rev. Cheol Soon Park, as moderator, spoke about healing and reconciliation to a few native representatives. On the one hand he was the titular leader of the offending institution. On the other, as a Korean, he personally identified with the legacy of pain and suffering because of what his ancestors had suffered a century earlier. And in that moment the identity of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was Korean, and aboriginal, and we were powerfully jerked out of our comfort zones into a

new potential. It can happen again if we will it so. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*

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# I AM A STRANGER

## RACISM AND THE EARLY CHURCH

BY DAVID W. T. BRATTSTON

Any article on attitudes to racism in the Christian church's foundational period would be necessarily short. There simply was none. The matter is far different for foreigners and strangers in general.

Racism was absent in the earliest church and in the non-Christian society surrounding it. Christians and other subjects of the Roman Empire simply did not make distinctions based on race. In fact, mentions of a person's skin colour are so rare as to be insignificant. For instance, the Christian Bardesanes in early third-century eastern Syria mentioned the fact that people come in different colours as an example of what everyone agreed was inconsequential.

The only discriminations were based on cultural factors. Jews divided the world into themselves and Gentiles, while for Greeks the distinction was between themselves and "barbarians"—people who did not share Greek language or culture. The Romans divided people between citizens and non-citizens, and then among various economic classes of citizens. The main Roman xenophobia was of hostile peoples outside the Empire.

In each case, however, individuals could cross the divides by joining the preferred group through financial or military achievement or by changing religion. Any antipathy was cultural, not ethnic, and was directed most against "oriental cults" or "superstitions," of which Christianity was one. In fact, there is only one ethnic slur by a Christian in the whole of the New Testament, and even that is a quotation from a member of the maligned group (Titus 1:12).

On the other hand, scripture and other ancient Christian writings say much about how to regard individuals new to a community, whether they come for employment, business opportunities, or conditions in their homelands. The term "immigrant" appears nowhere in the early literature because strict separation into nation states did not yet exist, with its restrictions on travel, employment and trade; the ancients did not generally think much about the reasons why newcomers had come, other than military invaders.

The use of the term "stranger" in the early Christian period was thus wide enough to include all persons new to a locale. Christian writers before AD 200 encouraged welcoming and generous treatment of immigrants and other strangers.

The earliest instruction about strangers is Christ's preaching that they be welcomed and protected, and whoever does so to the least of strangers does it to Jesus himself (Matthew 25:34-45). One apostle wrote that Christians are loyal to God when they render any service to newcomers (3 John 1:5).

A description of Christianity for heathens written around AD 125 in Athens reported that it was the Christian custom to take strangers into one's home and rejoice over them as if brothers and sisters. A similar book by a Christian





teacher who was martyred for the faith in Italy around AD 165 records that local Christian congregations used their funds to provide for orphans, widows, the sick, the needy and strangers. It also details that among the effects of conversion to Christianity was that “we who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them.”

In showing how elevated were Christian ethics, a moderator in France in the AD 180s included giving lodging in one’s own home to “the roofless stranger” and to “give rest to those that are shaken,” which would cover a newcomer experiencing culture shock from moving to a new country. About the same era, the moderator of Antioch in western Syria wrote similarly. Both clerics quoted Zechariah 7:10 in support.

Clement of Alexandria in Egypt was clean of the world’s foremost Christian educational institution from AD 192 to 202. He wrote, “Akin to love is hospitality, being a congenial art devoted to the treatment of strangers ... Hospitality, therefore, is occupied in what is useful for strangers; and guests are strangers; and friends are guests; and brethren are friends.” Even more universal is his statement, “Those are strangers, to whom the things of the world are strange.”

Christian morality, wrote Clement, obliges us to love strangers not only as friends and relatives, but as ourselves, both in body and soul. Accordingly, it is expressly said, “Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, for thou wast a sojourner in Egypt;” designating by the term Egyptian either one of that race, or any one in the world.

These authors lived so early and were so geographically widespread that their sentiments could have originated only with Jesus himself. Because they predate the division into present-day Christian denominations and before racism and immigration were subjects of controversy, well before Christianity was a state religion, their comments are relevant to Christians of every shade and hue in Canada today. ■

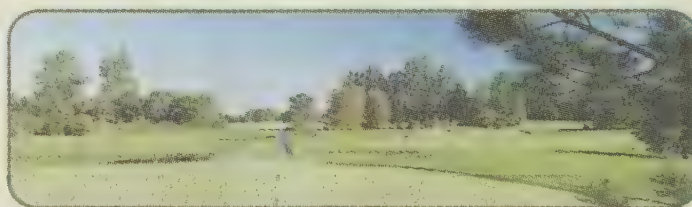
*David W. T. Brattston resides in Lunenburg, N.S.*





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# Believe

NOTHING LESS WILL DO. BY HARVEY SELF

*Stop doubting and believe.*  
—John 20:27

As I put my pen to paper for this article, Canada is about to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver and Whistler, B.C. In Canada there has been an intense buildup to these games, led by an inspiring media and public relations campaign by CTV and their partners. Front and centre in this campaign has been the slogan, "Believe." In the 14 months leading up to the Winter Olympics, Canadian athlete after Canadian athlete has been depicted reciting the almost creed-like litany, "I believe! Do you believe?" CTV host John Musselman declares in the campaign, "The 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games will be a defining moment in Canadian history." The voice-over for the video clips, done by Donald Sutherland, has him sounding every bit like an Old Testament prophet as he declares, "Belief ... its essence is invisible but its power is extraordinary."

Belief is important for a nation such as ours, hosting this kind of a mammoth athletic event; belief in our ability to pull it off and belief in our athletic representatives who do Canada proud as they make their way to the medals podium or as they achieve personal bests in their competitions. Belief is imperative for an athlete to perform to the level of her highest hopes and dreams. Belief is foundational for the church. And, of course, belief is absolutely vital for our

understanding of Easter.

The tomb was empty. Mary Magdalene had seen it and reported to the disciple Peter and another disciple not mentioned by name. They had raced to the empty tomb and also had seen the folded grave cloth where the body of Jesus had been laid. John records, "They saw and believed." (John 20:8) Then Mary heard the news from the angels, "He is not here; he is risen, just as he said." (Matthew 28:6) She had her own Easter experience of seeing and believing the Risen Christ. "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18)

But, one of their group, known down through tradition as Doubting Thomas, could still not grasp the events of that first Easter, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand in his side, I will not believe it." (John 20:25) To him Jesus appeared and challenged him pointedly, "Stop doubting and believe." (John 20:27) "Believe!"

I had the privilege recently to attend the Canadian church leaders' retreat sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches. Our gathering was addressed by the Commissioner of the Salvation Army in Canada, William Francis, who spoke of the need for "radical trust" in our lives as Christians, and specifically in our lives as Christian leaders. "Nothing less will do as we face an increasingly challenging and challenged world," is a short synopsis of his timely message.

The Christian life is so very much more than merely fulfilling



Harvey with his wife, Jayne

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our religious duties and occasionally showing up at church Sunday morning. It is about a radical trust in a God whom we know personally and into whose hands we have placed our lives, our hopes and our dreams. It is about "believing" in the God in whom "we live and more and have our being." (Acts 17:28) It is about being able to say of ourselves, with unshakeable confidence, "I believe!" And about being compelled to say to the world, "Do you believe?" ■

Blessings,



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **Knox, Ospringe, Ont.**

Ken Graham, a deacon at Knox, is a local farmer, is involved in the Erin Agricultural Society and has travelled the planet handing out bed kits for an organization called Sleeping Children Around the World ([scaw.org](http://scaw.org)). He is seen here receiving a cheque for the charity from Mary Cunningham of the Erin Rotary Club. He was also recipient of one of the highest Rotary accolades, the Paul Harris Award. "I feel like I'm doing what God wants me to do," he told a large crowd of politicians, colleagues, friends and family. "It is an honour—thanks so much." For a more detailed article see our website.



## **St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont.**

Cake of the Month: Rev. Dr. Raymond Hodgson has served St. Andrew's for the past decade. Last December he was honoured by the congregation as he sets into the next phase of his ministry, on the golf links. Eager to usher him to the next round of 18 were his son, Rev. Raymond Hodgson (left), serving at St. Bartholomew's Anglican, Sarnia, and Rev. C. Joyce Hodgson, Dr. Ray's wife, serving at Laurel Lea St. Matthew's, Sarnia.







### Niagara Falls, Ont.

Following the massive earthquake in Haiti, four friends from three different high schools (Lucas Bahdi and Patrick Klimczak of A. N. Myer Secondary, Quy Dinh of Stamford Collegiate, and Cullen Manningham of St. Paul High) in Niagara Falls approached Drummond Hill Presbyterian Church to inquire if they could organize an evening of dancing. Advertising through word of mouth and on Facebook, they sold more than 100 tickets, and raised and donated \$1,100 to Presbyterian World Service and Development for relief work in Haiti. Rev. Wally Hong of Drummond Hill (right) accepted the cheque on behalf of the church. Also pictured is local MPP, Kim Craitor (centre), who heard of their efforts.



### St. Andrew's, Hamilton, Bermuda

Rev. John Fraser, centre, was inducted into St. Andrew's, Hamilton, Bermuda, (that's right, Bermuda!) last August. There to participate in the service were Rev. Jan Hieminga (acting moderator) and Rev. Bryn McPhail (interim moderator) from the Presbytery of West Toronto.

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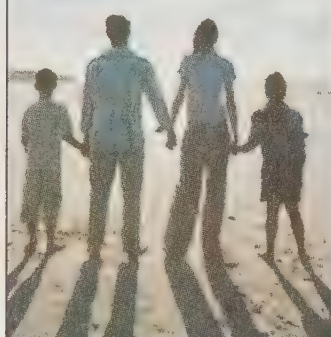
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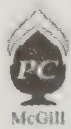
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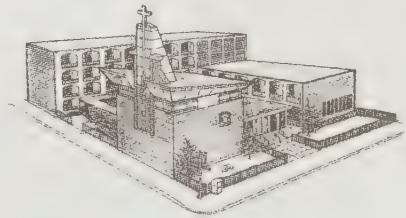
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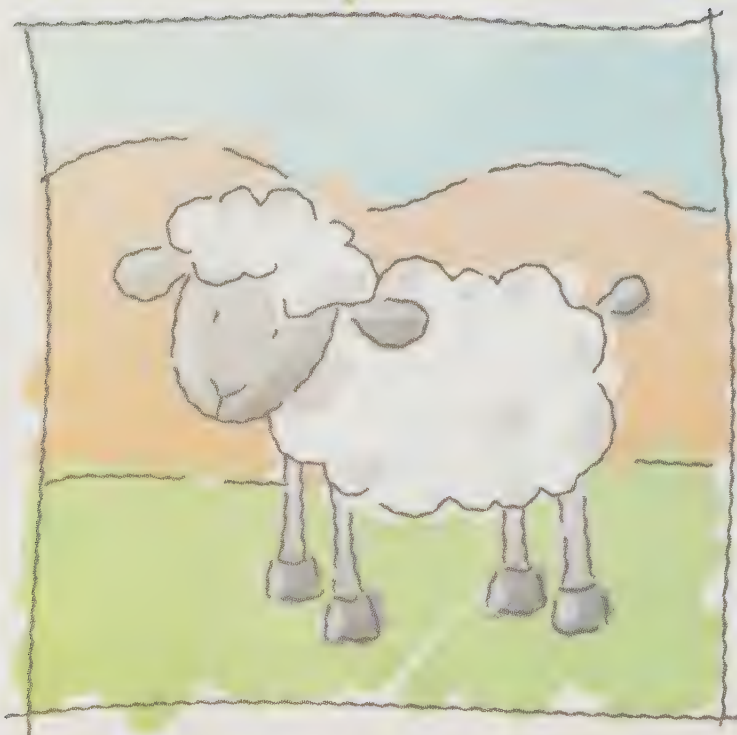
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# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

What is so good about Good Friday?



Good Friday is the Friday before Easter. It is the day we remember the cruel death of Jesus Christ. He loved his Father (and us!) so much that he willingly gave us his life as a sacrificial lamb.

In the Old Testament, Jewish people would kill a lamb and offer it to God so that God would forgive their sins. In the Bible (John 1:29), John the Baptist saw Jesus coming and told the people "look, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

Jesus sacrificed himself on this day for the greater good of God's people. The humiliation, pain, and death he experienced were a sacrifice on our behalf. Today, we appreciate the price of that sacrifice and we do things to remember the great good that Jesus' sacrifice brought.

Some people go to church on the morning of Good Friday. Some people darken their church so no light comes in. Some people sing really somber, sad songs. Some people make Hot Cross Buns.

## Hot Cross Buns Recipe (you'll need a bread maker-- and an adult's help-- for this!)

### Ingredients

- 3/4 cup warm water
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp instant powdered milk
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 3/8 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp active dry yeast
- 3/4 cup dried currants
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp water

### Directions

1. Put warm water, butter, skim milk powder, 1/4 cup sugar, salt, egg, egg white, flour, and yeast in bread maker and start on "dough program."
2. When five minutes of kneading are left, add currants and cinnamon. Leave dough in the machine until it doubles in size.
3. Punch it down on floured surface, cover, and let rest for 10 minutes. Shape dough into 12 balls and place in a greased 9 x 12-inch pan. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 35-40 minutes.
5. Mix egg yolk and two tablespoons water. Brush on the balls.
6. Bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately and cool on wire rack.

### For the Icing:

- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp milk

Mix together, then draw a cross on top of each bun to remind us of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.



*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

to the other, and not up to any long trips. We started calling them the Prodigals. At any rate, we took a real blast from an arctic front in December and the two of them perched on our bird feeder looking like death frozen over. Linda bailed them out with some deer fat and homemade bread scraps thinking that if they survived till the first Chinook wind they would leave.

But they stayed, through the North Pole's opening performance in December, through the three-week command performance in January and the late season holdover in February. It turned out the winter was the coldest in years. Through it all the two crows survived simply on opportunism. Each day Linda would put sunflower seeds in our bird feeders for the usual winter crowd and the crows would appear out of nowhere for their share. She would put out peanuts for the squirrel and bingo, there were the two crows for a share of nuts. She would put out fat for all the various woodpeckers and the Prodigals would be Johnny-on-the-spot, taking opportunity of some of that. After her regular morning walks with Bud the Lab, Linda would put out a special morning ration of bread scraps for the two crows. The Prodigals would silently wait for her on the spruce trees outside the house. They would then follow Linda and Bud on their walk, hopping from power pole to power pole as they went. And then they would wait patiently outside the door for Linda to hand over the bread when she returned.

The Prodigals were the best opportunists I have ever seen, not overbearing but patiently waiting to take advantage of every opportunity that presented itself. And they thrived through a winter that killed many birds, including a batch of early arrival robins that succumbed to a vicious cold snap near the beginning of March. We tried to feed the robins but they would not take advantage of the break, preferring death to opportunism.

Opportunism. As I reflect upon the Prodigals I can't help but think oppor-

tunism is given a bad rap these days. If someone is described as an opportunist it is almost always a pejorative reference. But really what are we as to the grace of God except opportunists? Easter really nails this for me. As Paul put it for the Christians in first-century Rome: "But God has shown us how much He loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! By his blood we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God's anger! We were God's enemies, but He made us His friends through the death of His Son. Now that we are God's friends, how much more will we be saved by Christ's life!"

Now doesn't that make you feel like one of the Prodigals as to the saving grace of God? It sure does me. When I could not provide for myself, God gave me an opportunity, one that I didn't deserve. And God reaches out nail-scarred hands and says to me, "Be a prodigal. Be an opportunist. Take advantage of the life I give. Believe!" As a person saved by the grace of God, I am an opportunist, feasting on the table He provides. Hallelujah!

But if this is true about the saving grace of God, how much more so regarding the sustaining grace of God. More and more I have become aware that I don't sustain myself. God by His grace sustains me. I am a firm believer in hard work and I used to believe that my hard work was what sustained me. But as I have aged, I have realized that what I need to thrive or even survive, I can't provide for myself. These things seem to be handed to me as opportunities. And as I come to realize this, I am discovering what it means to be an opportunist and truly a grateful and thankful prodigal. The words of Annie Johnson Flint say it well:


*He giveth more grace  
when the burdens grow greater;  
He sendeth more strength  
when the labours increase.  
To added affliction  
He addeth His mercy;  
To multiplied trials,  
His multiplied peace.*

*When we have exhausted  
our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere  
the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of  
our hoarded resources,  
Our Father's full giving is only begun.*

*His love has no limit;  
His grace has no measure.  
His pow'r has no boundary  
known unto men.  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
He giveth, He giveth,  
and giveth again! ■*

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

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# The Prodigals

HE GIVES MORE GRACE WHEN THE BURDENS GROW GREATER. **BY DAVID WEBBER** ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

## SPLAT!

"What on earth was that?" exclaimed Linda.

The answer to her question came by way of piercing whistles and blood-curdling screams. I nearly scalded myself as I ejected out of bed slopping my morning coffee. Peering out the bedroom window to the top of the hill a hundred feet from our place, I got a bird's eye view of what was causing the ruckus. It was of course birds. Big ones.

Smack in the middle of the road, at the top of the hill was a good size squawfish, still wiggling and writhing in the dirt. Power-diving it with angry, piercing aerial whistles was one of our good neighbours, Osprey. Strutting back and forth on the bank a couple of metres above the fish, providing the blood-curdling screams, was one of our not so good neighbours, a seriously cheesed white-headed buzzard better known as Bald Eagle.

"It looks like Osprey was fly fishing, caught a big one and Eagle tried to hijack the flight," I said. "The only problem seems to be that this time Eagle's timing was a bit off and he missed catching the fish in mid-air. The fish smacked onto our driveway and Eagle and Osprey are currently negotiating." Linda could barely make out my commentary over

the negotiations. She bounded out of bed to peer out the window and see for herself.

"Those two clowns," she said. "All summer long, day after day, the same scenario plays out. This is a new twist for an ending though. I can't ever remember them fish-bombing our driveway before."

We stood at the window with our early morning coffee, watching as the negotiations ground to an impasse. That's when the two crows showed up and silently perched on a tall spruce tree nearby to see how things would turn out. "Look," said Linda, "now the Prodigals are here to take advantage of an opportunity."

And take advantage they surely did. Osprey, a confirmed mariner, would not land on dirt to claim the catch of the day. Eagle was too much of a chicken to climb down the bank to steal the game. So after a time they both left and the two crows moved in and took advantage of a wonderful opportunity. They had a feast.

Linda had saved the lives of these two crows over the winter. For some reason they never left for warmer digs in late November like crows usually do in these parts. I think it might have been the fact that one of the two was a small sickly chick, perhaps a weaker sibling

continued on page 49



# St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont.

BY GAYLE HARRISON

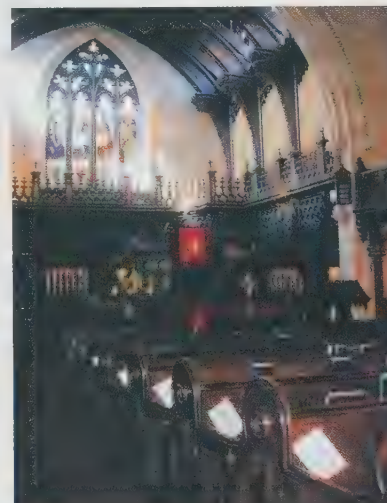
Amid the clatter of a busy downtown city sits a haven of peace and sanctity—St. Paul's, an English Gothic stone structure designed by the renowned architect William Thomas and built in 1857. Its tower and octagonal spire is believed to be the tallest stone spire in Canada.



"God's Acre" refers to the burial ground surrounding the church building where many early worshippers are buried. When additions were made to the current church, it was necessary to remove some of the remains and re-inter them beneath the chancel. The commemorative tablets were incorporated in the walls of the church extension.



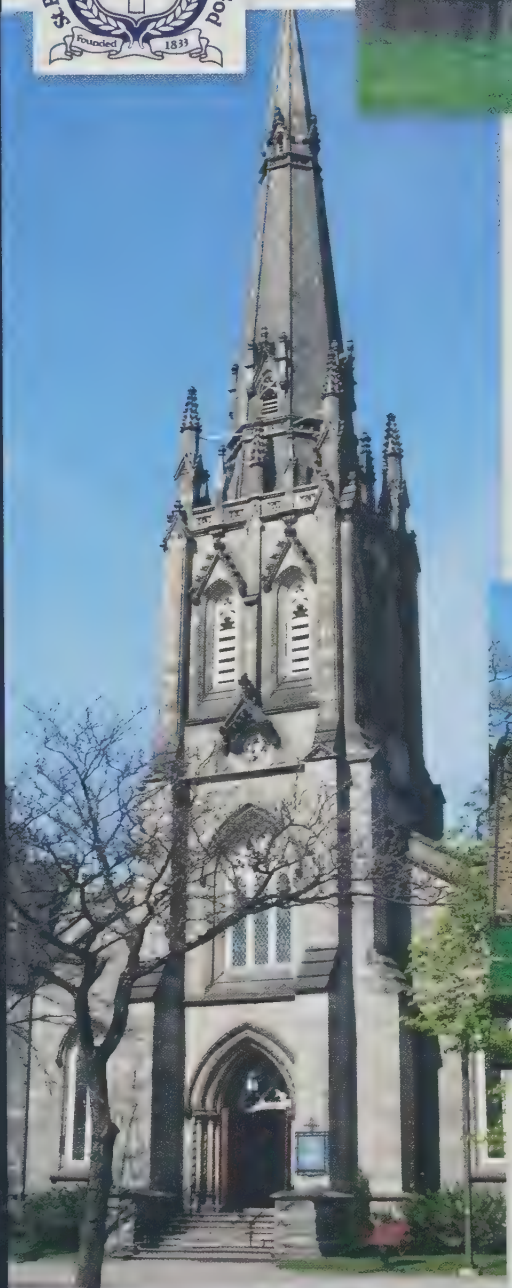
The church bell was used in the original white frame church built in 1833 on the same spot. It was replaced by the current chimes in 1906, but still hangs in a belfry over the chapel door.



The woodcarvings in the sanctuary create a sense of warmth and awe. Small doors are located on the ends of the pews. The carved pulpit sits in the centre of the chancel. Looking down on this is a stained glass window, one of many in the sanctuary, depicting Christ at the Last Supper.



A large Celtic cross, counted one of the most beautiful war memorials in Canada, was erected to commemorate fallen church members from the great wars. Carved in Scotland, it is similar to the ancient Iona crosses. The column tapers from its base to the apex, with the truncated arms of the cross encircled with a symbolic crown or wreath.





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# Rearranging Priorities

GOD HAS BEEN GENEROUS TO US. BY DAVID HARRIS

*"Vanity of vanities,  
all is vanity."  
So said the Preacher.*

It was all I could think of as I picked up the glossy real estate flyer that came in the mail the other day.

The homes, all in southern Ontario, started at around \$15 million and were described with more ecstasy than a four-year-old discovering hidden chocolate Easter eggs. One was a "fabulous family compound!" Compound? For what??

The flyer set me wondering. What was its aim? After all, no one who can buy a multimillion-dollar home is waiting for a free flyer to detail their opportunities.

Four pages in, and the game revealed itself. It was a kind of bait and switch. Can't afford \$12 million, well, what about \$1 million? Or perhaps \$850,000? Makes you feel rich by extension. Kind of like rubbing shoulders with big money.

What kind of delusion are we buying into? It's no use blaming the realtors. They advertise like this because it works. Because we buy into the myth they are creating. Meanwhile, practically every day, someone is noting that Canadian real estate is on a bubble—about 20 per cent overvalued.

And you don't have to live in Vancouver or Toronto to get a feel for our collective obsession with wealth. Every newspaper, newsmagazine and nightly news is crammed with stories about the economy and how to become rich.

Take mortgages. Each day for the past two or three months produces yet another expert who looks into the



crystal ball to tell you when rates are going up and whether you should lock in now or wait—as well as noting that too many Canadians are too highly leveraged as it is. The psychic in the strip mall is as good a prognosticator as the so-called experts, but she doesn't sell newspapers, although at least she has a real crystal ball.

We are bewitched with money and wealth. Take our attitude towards pollution and urban sprawl. If someone thinks it's going to cost us money in the short term (which it will), our elected representatives from the municipal to federal level safely conclude we won't object that cleaning up the earth can wait for another generation.

We as a nation, and most of us as individuals, are wealthy. Yet none of it is our own doing. Health, education, infrastructure and opportunities are unbelievable here. To live in Canada is a gift. Ultimately, a gift from God.

Followers of Jesus know this. They say they believe they must not only thank God for their riches, but care for creation and return to God a token of their wealth as thanks and redistribute their wealth to ensure the poor are not neglected.

They say this. We say this. But do we do this?

God has been so generous to us. The only possible response is to be

generous back to God (supporting the church) and to our neighbours in need, whether they be next door or halfway around the world.

Everything is from God and everything returns to God. It's not for God's sake but ours that we exercise stewardship. It reminds us to be humble about all our blessings, and it is through us that the divine love and care is extended to all God's children.

Church members are facing some serious financial issues at both the national level and the local level. Too often too much of a congregation's budget is going to heat and maintenance.

There is more than enough money within the Presbyterian Church to accomplish the broad mission of extending God's love wherever we can. But it will require some rearranging of priorities.

First, individuals need to think seriously about proportional giving. That is, giving as a percentage of one's income. Start somewhere—one, two, three percent, and keep building a little more each year.

Secondly, congregations who cannot reasonably support ministry because they are supporting old churches need to reassess their local mission. The church is not in the museum business. It's about a living faith.

We need to make sure our stone buildings don't become millstones of real estate vanity. ■

*David Harris*



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## Animators Need Training

*Re Seek to be Changed, February*

What a blessing Gordon McCrostie's article turned out to be! But we in music ministry need access to training to be effective animators of this transforming experience; our congregations, on average, are quite small, and most rely on volunteer music leadership. How do we equip these leaders for the future without driving them away in the present? And, should we need to engage more musical and other artistic professionals in the ministry of worship, are we prepared to honour their expertise with appropriate compensation and recognition of their skills?

I hope that we, as the Presbyterian Church, can make this kind of enhancement of our worship and music ministry a genuine priority, and that in so doing we can get out of the way of the Holy Spirit in leading this new Reformation of the worship of God.

**CHRIS FISCHER**, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC  
MINISTRIES, KNOX, GUELPH, ONT.

## Faith: A Contact Sport

*Re Lift Up Your Voice, February*

It appears that Joyce Gladwell took one for the team by sharing her intimate hospital experience with *Record* readers. Her voice nudges and inspires individuals to embrace God's infinite gifts, first as an amazed child and then as an adult capable of being in wonder and grace. I'm confident that the hip socket and new prosthesis give added mobility and speed and will promote Joyce to the apostles' travelling team, as she is from Elmira, Ont., and hockey there is the other "god."

**JACOBUS DEBOCK**, ALMA, ONT.

## Make Kairos a Public Issue

*Re Restore Kairos's Funding, January*

Leadership always comes from the top, not the bottom. An online petition from grassroots Presbyterians will likely receive a signed picture from

# Letters



Minister John Baird thanking us for our continued support. On the other hand, a press conference, held by a coalition of Christian churches demanding an explanation of Ministers Bev Oda and Baird's comments will get the attention of not only Canada's Christians but likely the prime minister as well.

Instead of settling for seven million dollars, I would rather see the Presbyterian Church organize the other supporting groups of Kairos to address this situation. Make this a public issue and, if necessary, an election issue. Only then will it stop. Today it was Kairos; tomorrow it will be something else.

**JIM MARTIN**, BRADFORD, ONT.

## Crime Not Stats

*Re Populist Thuggery, March*

Frankly, your attempt to provide statistics so as to bolster the case for lesser sentences and less incarceration appears to be a very large, very red and very redundant herring. The statistical incidence of any form of crime has nothing whatsoever to do with the severity of it as an anti-social act against innocent members of society.

I'm afraid that you are singing ➤

write to us

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## Pontius' Puddle



from an entirely wrong hymnal here; it's been my observation that most Canadians, including my numerous Presbyterian friends, want sentences for heinous crimes increased not decreased.

DON MULCAHY, STRATHROY, ONT.

Your article is quite unbelievable! I will still lock my door whenever I go out and will not walk alone after dark even in my small city. And for good reason!

HELEN BEAUGRAND, PENTICTON, B.C.

Many thanks for the excellent editorial. I really appreciate your insight and very interesting writing.

I also agree with your opinion about restorative justice. Your article has 100 per cent support from me! I am very proud of you and the *Presbyterian Record*!

SEUNG KIM, VIA EMAIL

### Whinging Faiz

*Re Passive Activism, March*

Having just read Andrew Faiz's article on the TV fundraisers for Haiti, I'm still shaking my head! Hey, a whole industry gets mobilized to raise millions for the destitute and all they get is some kind of grudging acknowledgement buried in a bunch

of whinging.

Just like the rest of us, our broadcasters did what they were best equipped to do. They quickly swung into action using the skills, talents and tools of the trade that they were blessed to have at their disposal.

DAVID HUNTER, TORONTO

### Blair Offered No Regrets

*Re McGill Partnering With Tony Blair, February*

The news item should raise some eyebrows. Blair is a man who through lies and deception helped launch an illegal and immoral war that has resulted in the death or displacement of millions of people and turned a country into chaos, and who has steadfastly refused to admit any regrets over the results of his policies. At the same time he trumpets his faith, but in what is not exactly clear.

CHARLES NEILL, EDMONTON



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**God is with the Poor**

In your 2010 series *Where in the World is God?*, I hope you have chosen someone to write on the basic theme that God is with the poor. In our postmodern age the notion that God has a "preferential option for the poor" has become somewhat quaint. After all, don't we all have issues? I am aware of the critique of liberation theology, but what has replaced it? The modern focus on individual fulfillment, be it in Canada or Africa, seems nicely to avoid the notion of the church as "the body of Christ" and our collective responsibilities for the stewardship of the created order as well as the socio-economic systems we create.

REV. GLENN INGLIS, MALAWI

*The Theology 101 Committee responds:*

Glenn, you raise a crucial issue. If we see poverty as partly self-caused and partly due to natural phenomena (such as living in accident-prone Haiti)

we can remain above the fray.

But if we in the Developed World seize it as the leading symptom of human greed and selfishness, we may develop a stewardship of wealth that includes these others as partners rather than objects of pity and charity.

Our Reformed heritage, not to mention scripture, speaks much on poverty and the issues of charity and justice. The *Theology 101* series will continue into 2011 and poverty will be on the agenda.

REV. DRS. JOSEPH MCLELLAND, JOHN VISSERS,  
PAM MCCAROLL, RICHARD TOPPING

**Presuppositions of Scripture**

*Re Where in the World is God?*, January

Dr. McLelland is a distinguished churchman, a venerable scholar, a clever thinker and a good writer. He is not however, what I would call Reformed. The ideas and conclusions which he puts

forward in his writings, while unique and advanced in their construction, are merely the result of 19th-century German liberalism coming full circle, not Reformation theology.

They have more in common with someone whose motto is, Understanding Seeking Faith(s), than they do with someone who pursues the motto of Faith Seeking Understanding.

To be Reformed means that our first commitment is to saving faith in Christ, not modern knowledge and needs. As the Holy Spirit sanctifies and re-forms our intellects and minds we come to see how the key presuppositions which go along with modern knowledge and needs are the antithesis of the presuppositions of the scriptures.

REV. GRANT GUNNINK, CALGARY

*Joseph McLelland responds:*

The idea that "always reforming" ➤

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involves attention to “modern knowledge” comes from the original mandate of the Articles of Faith Committee (now Committee on Doctrine) which was ordered to interpret our tradition in light of “thought-forms of today.” I disagree with the reference to 19th-century German liberalism. Like Karl Barth, I am “Kantian” in my theory of knowledge, but reject the Enlightenment thesis that reason rules. Calvin was influenced by Greek philosophers, and the Reformers had strong philosophical biases. Within a century after the Reformation the “second scholastic” movement led to strange doctrines such as double predestination (that God not only elects some to heaven but intentionally condemns most to hell), the absolute divine decrees and superstition about the sacraments. Not to mention denial of the benefits of wine (remember that part of Calvin’s monthly salary included a large amount of wine).

### Defining Doctrine

Blair Williams’ February letter raises important questions: What is doctrine?

Assuming that we’re unwilling to pursue the route of silence concerning our faith (to say nothing about never thinking about it), we need to ask ourselves the question, “How do we arrive at our doctrine?” or, more to the point, “How do we know what we can say about God?”

The short answer is that we can say what the Bible says. Christian faith is grounded in revelation: we know God only because He has made himself known to us. When we speak about Him, we’re not simply guessing but echoing—if we speak from scripture. Anything else, however, leads us into speculation. That is the answer that our denomination is committed to, and which every teaching and ruling elder has said he or she accepts.

DUNCAN CAMERON, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

*Editor’s Note:* And to take Duncan’s point to the next step means learning how to read the Bible. And for those who missed it, Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls’ excellent introduction in the June 2009 *Record*, How to Read the Holy Bible, is available on our website. Put Pat’s name in our search box and you’ll find it easily.

*Correction:* April’s *Record* reported that Evangel Hall raised \$200,000 at its February fundraiser. The actual amount is \$20,000. ■

### online extra

#### FROM THE LETTERS EDITOR:

THIS MONTH WE HAVE CHOSEN TO PRESENT MORE LETTERS, BUT EACH ONE IS HEAVILY EDITED—THE FULL VERSION IS ONLINE. THINK OF THESE SNIPPETS AS TASTERS; THE FULL MEAL IS ON [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)

## We remember with thanks

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Katharine Mackenzie, Mary Livingston Rae, Harold Alexander Scott,  
Douglas Graham Seaton, Edna Tansley, and Wilfred Webber.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada thanks God for their generosity and foresight and is grateful for the legacy of faith and hope they have bequeathed to the church. They are truly God’s *ProVisionaries*.

Their generosity will be celebrated during the  
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# Connected

THERE IS A HUMBLING MYSTERY AT WORK IN OUR LIVES. **BY ANDREW FAIZ**



**Y**ou think you're doing just fine, but it's only afterwards you find out what a mess you were (are!). The day, mid-March, when my mother passed away, I made a few phone calls to family across the world, went to the funeral of a wonderful lady who had been mom's friend since the 1950s, and then popped into a funeral home to make arrangements. All through this I felt I was holding it together just fine—I could drive and breathe at the same time. It was a week or so later that my sister noticed I had given the funeral home the wrong date of birth and the wrong date of death. Minor details, perhaps, but telling—and which will cost us in increased paper work with government agencies.

This false sense of competence is a powerful dynamic, hiding as it does a fear of vulnerability. We fear that if we are weak the world will not accept us. A dear friend took me aside at the viewing and told me in no uncertain terms that I did not have to "be charming" that evening. I told him, it was the only way I knew of getting through the event. He was correct, of course, in his blessed chastisement; and so was I. It was the only way I knew, but it was the wrong way.

Why I needed to be strong is a mystery I'm sure a team of psychoanalysts could unravel. And I probably need to place myself in their hands despite the evidence of care, love and support from the massive collection of communities to which my siblings, my parents and I belong. Even now as I write this a month later I receive emails, letters, cards from our friends and colleagues. It is an impressive

reminder that we are not alone.

At the funeral were my parents' friends; many of them proudly telling me they had known mom and dad longer than me. There were church friends; many who have become more my uncles, aunts and cousins over the years. There were us kids' friends and colleagues. There was one of my friend's high school girlfriends; a woman I have met perhaps three times over the past four decades. What compelled her to come to the funeral is beyond me, but is a reminder that our lives extend into areas we may have forgotten but have not forgotten us. At the other end of the time-space scale, there was a young woman I have known only recently. Again, what compelled her to come to suburbia on public transit, eight months pregnant with her first child, for the funeral of a woman she never met, is a testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit knitting us together.

And to my mind it is nothing less than the Spirit at work—a mystery manifest. Even before my mother's passing I felt the prayers and connections from across continents and oceans. During her last month, I started updating some family members as to her health via email. Those recipients forwarded the emails to others. These new recipients wrote me

asking to be placed on the primary list. And so forth.

The common cliché is that blood is thicker than water, which is meant to mean blood connections—family—are the most important. This is utter nonsense; an excuse for tribalism. Spirit is thicker than all; it is what binds us. Sadly we only recognize it in our most vulnerable states. And then there're

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CHARMING"  
THAT EVENING

folks like me, who even while recognizing it are unable to express their vulnerability.

That doesn't mean I'm not humbled—which along with being vulnerable is an uncomfortable state for me. I'm humbled that this ordinary life of work, mortgage, giggles and show tunes is connected to hundreds and thousands of remarkable souls through a mystery I don't fully comprehend. And this isn't theology or theory; this is fact. I've recently seen the numbers at work. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



## Come One, Come All

National Presbyterian event to welcome all women. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A NATIONAL WOMEN'S conference hosted by the Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society on May 20-23, 2011 will feature Dr. Margaret Somerville, ethicist and professor at Montreal's McGill University. The sometimes-controversial speaker, who founded the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law, will present the keynote address.

"We're hoping that whether the women agree or disagree with her viewpoints, they will at least be challenged by her words and will think through her ideas," said Rev. Sarah Kim, the WMS' executive director.

The National Presbyterian Women's Gathering will be held just north of Toronto in Richmond Hill, Ont., and is open to all women over the age of 18. The event's organizers hope grandmothers will bring along their granddaughters, and mothers will bring their daughters.

"The PCC is becoming congregational in some ways, and this will allow women to come together, to be themselves, and realize they're not alone," said Druse Bryan, outgoing president of the WMS.

"We hope this will really mean something to the women in the church."

Though the idea was approved in the fall of 2008, it came together over time through a series of discussions, as well as travels to other countries where women's gatherings were commonplace and much loved. Presbyterian

**"We hope women will come and be transformed, revived and renewed"**

Women—the main women's organization in the PC(USA)—has been holding an event like this every three years, and it is always much anticipated and hugely successful.

"We hope women will come and be transformed, revived and renewed," said Kim. "We hope they will forge new friendships, grow together, learn together, and just enjoy being together."

Kim noted that such events are often even more meaningful for women who live in rural or remote areas and may rarely have an opportunity to gather in large numbers.

"We often hear that women are the

backbone of the church, and we have the sense that women want to have a national gathering," said Kim. "It's time to have this. It's long overdue."

The event's theme is Look In, Shout Out, and is based on the idea of being transformed found in Romans 12. It will feature 29 workshops centred on five themes: women, justice, mission, leadership development, and spirituality. Ecumenical and international guests will also be featured.

The planning team stressed that while the WMS and AMS are planning the conference, the event is open to all women from across the country. The hope is for 800 to attend, though the meeting space has a capacity of 1,200. If successful, it's possible that the conference will become a regular occurrence.

Family rates and subsidies are available if needed, and prizes—including free registration and free hotel accommodations—are up for grabs to those registered by Nov. 15. The final deadline for registering is March 31, 2011. For more information visit [womensgathering.ca](http://womensgathering.ca) or call the WMS office at 1-800-619-7301. ■

## Head of Planned Giving Plans to be Moderator

Herb Gale is moderator-elect for the 136th General Assembly. BY CONNIE PURVIS

REV. DR. HERB GALE, associate secretary of Planned Giving, will stand as moderator-elect at the 2010 General Assembly, which begins June 6 in Sydney, N.S.

The North Carolina native is planning to balance his new duties and his passion for planned giving. With a little nudge from God, he hopes to help the

church remember how to dream.

"Many congregations don't dream because they say, 'how will we fund that?'" he said. "But when you find a strong resonance [with a particular ministry], you find the money. I believe there is a vital future for the church, and I think you need to really understand that and believe that.

"We're an Easter people. The tomb is empty. Christ is risen. He's in our midst. Every dead end could be a new beginning. How can we not have hope?"

Gale lives in Guelph, 65 kilometres west of Toronto, and has worked at national offices for six years.

His nomination will likely be affirmed when assembly begins on June 6. ■



# Muslim Woman Expelled Over Veil, Files Complaint

A MUSLIM WOMAN has filed a human rights complaint after she was expelled from a Quebec college for refusing to remove her face veil.

The Egyptian-born woman, who is a permanent resident of Canada, was enrolled in a government-sponsored French language class for new immigrants in Montreal.

The school, CÉGEP St. Laurent, expelled her in November 2009 after she refused to remove her niqab, a veil that covers the face with only a slit for the eyes.

The school argued that the niqab interfered with the language teaching, since part of the class involves proper elocution and seeing how a person pronounces words in French.

School officials said they had tried different ways of accommodating the woman between February and November 2009. She had previously asked that male students in the class not face her, so school officials allowed her to give a presentation at the far end of the classroom with her back turned to the other students.

The order to remove her niqab came after officials from Quebec's immigration ministry visited the class. She was told she could take the class on the internet.

The woman, identified only as Naema, has filed a complaint with Quebec's Human Rights Commission, saying that her freedom of religion was violated. ■—*ENI*



## Canada in 2031: Greater Diversity, Fewer Christians

THE NUMBER of non-Christians in Canada could almost double by the year 2031 according to a report released by Statistics Canada in March.

Of those who adhere to a religion other than Christianity, about one half could be Muslim, up from 35 per cent of the non-Christian population in 2006.

The number of Christians is expected to decline about 10 per cent during the same period, from 75 to 65 per cent, while those who claim no religious affiliation could rise from 17 to 21 per cent.

The stats are part of a report that projects a substantial rise in the diversity of the Canadian population through both immigration and births. ■—*C.Purvis*

## Quebec Human Rights Commission Weighs in on Muslim Veils

THE QUEBEC HUMAN RIGHTS commission has ruled that Muslim women who wear veils must show their faces when applying for health cards in the province.

Additionally, Muslim women may not demand to be served by women at provincial health insurance board offices, the commission said in a decision released in mid-March.

The rulings are the latest to attempt to balance the rights of minorities with religious rights and gender equality, and they have sparked vigorous debate across the country.

Quebec's health insurance board had previously accommodated such special requests but asked the human rights commission for an opinion on the matters.

Between 2008 and 2009, only 10 out of 146,000 applicants for health card photo identification asked for special accommodation

because they wore a niqab, a face veil that has a slit for the eyes, or burqa, a full-body veil with a screen for the eyes.

The rights commission ruled that asking a woman to unveil to confirm her identity did not violate her freedom of religion. It added that the health insurance board is not obligated to provide a woman employee to serve a woman wearing a niqab or burqa. ■—*ENI*

## Kilgour Wins the Nobel Prize

PRESBYTERIAN POLITICIAN and human rights advocate David Kilgour has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his investigations of alleged organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners in China.

His research partner, human rights lawyer David Matas, has also been independently nominated. They previously won the 2009 Human Rights Award from the International Society for Human Rights.

The duo coauthored *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong Practitioners for their Organs*. The book details interviews

and research which suggests imprisoned practitioners have become the victims of a lucrative market for organ transplants.

Falun Gong is a system of beliefs and practices founded in China in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. The country's Community Party banned the movement in 1999.

Kilgour was a serial MP for southeastern Edmonton between 1979 and 2006, and served as secretary of state for Latin America and Africa, and for Asia-Pacific.

The Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded Dec. 10 in Oslo, Norway. ■—*C.Purvis*



# Church Councils Forge Ahead

Assembly Council and Life and Mission Agency gear up for assembly.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN AND CONNIE PURVIS

## Mixed Reviews for Biennial Assemblies

The possibility of holding General Assembly every second year garnered the most discussion at Assembly Council's March meeting, but the proposal was eventually defeated. The council reaffirmed the current practice of annual assemblies.

A survey of the church's courts and national committees found that 58 per cent of respondents were in favour of biennial assemblies, while 42 per cent were opposed. Those in favour suggested the change would include better stewardship of time, environmental and financial resources, and could provide a more effective working cycle for assembly committees. Those opposed worried it could weaken connections among Presbyterians, increase the time it takes to make decisions, create extra work for the moderator, and increase the influence and power of national staff and committees. The decision will go to General Assembly in June for final approval.

Council also approved the creation of a committee to examine the use of time at assemblies, with the intention of including both a business portion and a conference element.

## Budgets Tighten for 2011

The church's 2011 budget was a subject of concern for both the council and the Life and Mission Agency.

The LMA shaved a total of \$170,000 from programming and staff salaries for 2011, with its various departments cutting between 2.3 and 2.8 per cent from their respective budgets.

The church's Chief Financial Officer Stephen Roche told Assembly Council that, while the actual numbers aren't quite as grim as he thought last year when sweeping budget cuts were made

at the November meeting, the numbers are still cause for concern.

The budget forecast for the next three years is conservative, with few changes to current numbers and slight, hoped-for increases to Presbyterians Sharing, the main fund that provides the church's operating budget. The operating fund continues to decrease; it sat at over \$800,000 at the beginning of the year, and was down to \$532,000 by March. When Roche came to the church six years ago, the budget was at \$1.8 million. Increasing this fund has become a main priority for the management team, which is composed of the CFO, principal clerk and LMA general secretary.

"Are we finished with budget cuts?" asked Roche. "I don't think so, but hopefully the next few years will enable us to do some things to minimize any negative changes."

## Other Council Decisions:

- Canada Ministries loans for new church developments or church extensions will increase from \$100,000 to \$150,000 and loans to existing congregations will be increased from \$60,000 to \$100,000.
- In light of recent cutbacks, the management team will study the use and need for the church's missionary residence in Toronto, and will report back in the future.
- Council denied a request from the Presbyterian colleges to reverse a November decision to cut college grants by a quarter of a per cent. While the council affirmed the importance of the colleges, they felt reversing the decision would appear as though they were previously uninformed, and could be seen as offensive to other church staff whose finances were cut.

## A Remix for CY12 Planning Team

The Canada Youth 2012 planning team will be composed of three specialized coordinators who report to the associate secretary of the Vine instead of a single part-time planning coordinator as in previous years. Coordinators will each receive an annual \$5,000 honorarium. Each planning team, headed by a coordinator, will be composed of two adults and two young people who must apply for the positions.

## Only One Mission Priority Fund Receives 2009 Allocation

Although two new mission priority funds were approved in November, only the fund to sustain pastoral excellence will receive bequest money from 2009.

When the books closed, only \$32,500 was available for the five mission priority funds, which receive a portion of the money given to the church as undesignated bequests. Executive staff agreed to transfer \$30,000 into the fund, which is intended to assist with learning and support programs for ministers, and use the remaining \$2,500 for promotion. An additional \$50,000 from each of the three active funds will also be added to the account.

The missionary endowment fund will not seek start-up funding yet. The fund is intended to build up enough capital to pay for missionaries' salaries through the interest it generates.

## Changing Faces at LMA

- Rev. Daniel Cho completed his final meeting as convener. Helen Smith will take on the job after assembly in June.
- WMS President Druse Bryan will pass her mantle on to Joan Smith in May.
- Jennifer Whitfield will take over Ann Taylor's role as president of the AMS this September. ■



# Community News Briefs

## Presbyterians Lend a Hand in Vancouver

ST. ANDREW'S HALL STAFF, along with other Presbyterians in the Vancouver area, took part in the Winter Olympics—whether as official “blue-jacket” volunteers or as Christians rallying together in interdenominational outreach. Rev. Glen Davis, Presbyterian director of denominational formation, was a volunteer driver. While driving Olympic ice dance gold medalists Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue along East Hastings Street, Moir commented that this was “a different part of Vancouver,” giving Davis an opportunity to discuss the inner-city with them.

“Many think hospitality is just what we do for others, but it has a profound effect on ourselves as well,” said Davis. “Real hospitality extends welcome, shelter and care to all, no matter their race, status, class or financial situation.”

Rev. Chuck Congram came to B.C. from Windsor, Ont., for the experience of being an RCMP chaplain. His role was “to provide care, support and encouragement to police personnel and be available for crisis intervention.”

Richmond and Chinese Presby-



RCMP chaplains, including Presbyterian Chuck Congram (second from right) pose in front of their Olympic residence—a cruise ship.

terian churches joined with Christians from other denominations to participate in the More Than Gold outreach ministry located near the O-Zone Community Olympic Venue.

When we “receive guests as Christ,” as Saint Benedict described hospitality, then we are becoming ever more Christ-like. —Kathleen Bolton is communications coordinator for the Elder's Institute at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver.

## The Book of Praise Now in Braille

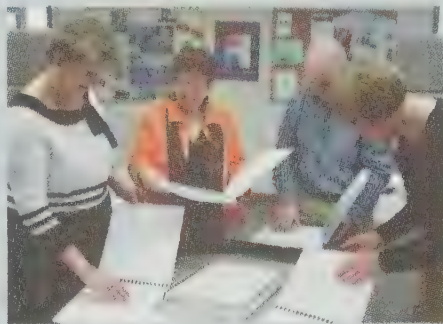
THANKS TO A GROUP of Baptist volunteers in Rochester, New York, Presbyterians in Canada can purchase the *Book of Praise* in braille for nearly the same price as a typical hymnbook.

The braille version comes in three boxes, includes a complete index of hymns, and carries a Canadian price tag of \$30. Because the set can only be produced by the U.S.-based charity at a rate of about one per week, new orders made through the WMS Book Room will be added to a waiting list. Shipping is free.

The First Baptist Church Braille Service is a modest group of about 30 certified braillists who volunteer their time to transcribe a range of materials, and charge only for paper and maintenance.

A professional transcription of the *Book of Praise* would probably have cost over \$600 to transcribe and \$80 per copy, but the group is charging only US\$25 per book. With a cost of about five cents per page, the 834-hymn, 1268-page set costs just over US\$60 to produce—more than double the price being charged to buyers.

“We’re pleased to be able to have done it,” said Lynn Pembroke, a profes-



Staff look through the new hymnal.

sional braillist and chair of the service. “It was a big endeavour and was more than we anticipated at the beginning, so it has gotten lengthy.”

Several braillists worked on the book simultaneously, typing up various sections at a rate of about 15 minutes per page—over 260 hours of work to type the hymns alone.

A thank you donation was sent to the group on behalf of the national church, but Canadians who wish to contribute or extend their thanks can send donations care of the secretary, Sandy Hollands, at 1120 South Creek Drive, Webster, NY, 14580. A letter will be issued to recognize contributions. ■ —C.Purvis

## B.C. Churches and Temples Offer \$25,000 for New Chaplain

RELIGIOUS GROUPS in Abbotsford, B.C., have pledged up to \$25,000 to hire a part-time spiritual care coordinator for the regional hospital after a dozen chaplain positions were cut late last year.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, minister at Calvin, Abbotsford, and the 2007 moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, has spearheaded the initiative as part of his work with the Abbotsford Christian Leaders Network. The plan is backed by several faith groups including local churches, mosques, and Sikh and Hindu temples, many of which have pledged between \$500 and \$3,000.

Kouwenberg says he considers the one-year chaplain position a “stop gap” solution to a deeper problem.

“The faith communities are ►



entering into this with some fear and trepidation because we feel the government should be paying for this," he said. "Chaplaincy is part of holistic health care. We must take care of not just the body and mind, but the spirit."

Fraser Health, which provides care to about 1.5 million people living in communities between Burnaby and Hope in western British Columbia, announced the elimination of a dozen full-time non-denominational spiritual care positions on Nov. 5, 2009, a move that would shave about \$650,000 annually from its \$2.48 billion budget. It was among a series of cuts aimed at consolidating services and limiting the impact of a projected \$10 million deficit. Social workers and volunteers from faith communities now provide spiritual support—which a Fraser Health report classified as a "non-core service"—at

the authority's 12 regional hospitals. Chaplains were retained in hospice and residential care facilities.

"Staff are missing the chaplains," Kouwenberg said. "There are families who may not be connected to a faith community but may have to face issues—like end of life issues—and want council and advice from a spiritual source. Many are falling through the cracks."

At press time, Kouwenberg was working with representatives of the Fraser Health Authority to create a "spiritual care covenant" which would be inclusive of all faiths, and has asked for the creation of a local spiritual care advisory council to monitor the work of a part-time chaplain. —C.Purvis

## P.E.I. Church Tackles Oil Spills

TYNE VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN, just west of Summerside, P.E.I., faced near-bankruptcy in March when cleanup costs for an oil spill on the church's property hit \$20,000 and kept climbing.

A slow leak on the bottom of an uninsured exterior oil tank was discovered on Feb. 3; about 400 litres of oil had already seeped into the ground. A dozen truckloads of contaminated soil were removed

from the site, but work halted in early March when funds ran dry. Local churches and individuals chipped in to help finish the job, but further digging on March 17 exposed a second, older oil spill requiring the removal of an additional 10 truckloads of soil. At press time, the church was awaiting the results of Environment Canada's latest soil sample analysis, which appeared promising.

The 750-litre tank was installed outside the 140-year-old church in 2001 and, following a professional inspection in 2007, had been tagged until 2021.

Church Treasurer Irene MacLean told P.E.I.'s *The Guardian* that total cleanup costs could be in the range of \$40,000, leaving the small church with a shortfall of \$14,000. —C.Purvis with files from the *Journal Pioneer* and *The Guardian*

## More Honours for Kettle

CHAPLAIN GENERAL DAVID KETTLE, a Presbyterian padre, has been appointed Honorary Chaplain to the Queen, a position that recognizes long and distinguished service. —C.Purvis ■

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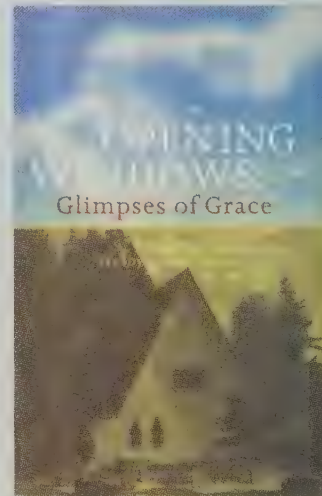
## The Story Behind... the Book

OPENING WINDOWS: GLIMPSES OF GRACE was born when its four editors invited the congregation of West Vancouver to submit prose or poetry describing inspirational people or significant moments in their lives.

"Ours is a small congregation, just over 100, but our hall was filled [on the night of our book launch] with writers, congregants and friends," said editor Cathy Sosnowsky. "Friends who are not church-goers purchased books, and responses were that they didn't realize how rich an experience belonging to a church community could be."

Funds raised from the sale of the 166-page book will go to the North Shore Crisis Services Society, which works to eliminate violence in homes and provides protection for abused women and children.

Copies can be purchased for \$19.95 through the WMS Book Room.  
Visit [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) to read excerpts from the book. ■—A.M.





**The Other Six Days** BY BRADLEY CHILDS**LOLing About on the Interwebs** Laughing out loud. BY BRADLEY CHILDS**LifeChurch**

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**Gifts of Change**

In Kenya and Malawi, the distance between churches can make it nearly impossible for young ministers to reach rural areas. But for only a small one-time gift of \$150 you or your church family can buy a mountain bike that

will allow these ministers to be three times more active in remote churches.

**FIND IT @** [presbyterian.ca/donate/giftsofchange](http://presbyterian.ca/donate/giftsofchange)

**The Lolcat Bible**

The Lolcat Bible is an attempt to put the entire Bible into "lolspeak" or internet slang. It will use the new international language of the internet, mainly that of [icanhascheezburger.com](http://icanhascheezburger.com), and memes (catchphrases, internet inside jokes and viral videos). This Bible is a completely new way of communicating the Bible. Here's a sample from the Lord's Supper in Mark 14:22: "Wen dey wer nommin Happy Cat taek teh cheezburger an brek it, an he sez, 'Taek dis cheezburger an eet it, cuz dis liek mah bodi. But dun reely

nom me. Just nom teh cheezburger an pretend it mah bodi. K?'"

**FIND IT @** [lolcatbible.com](http://lolcatbible.com)

**Interview with Julie Clawson**

This delightful interview with Julie Clawson discusses her new book *Everyday Justice*. It focuses on how to easily serve others through your everyday lifestyle.

**FIND IT @** [search.theooze.tv](http://search.theooze.tv) for:

Julie Clawson

**Quotable**

"Money cannot buy health, but I'd settle for a diamond-studded wheelchair."  
—Dorothy Parker ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

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# The Faces of Fair Trade

Delegates journey through the mountains of Nicaragua.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

JOHAN DESCHIFFART admits Nicaragua is "not a place I'd want to go for a tourist trip."

As he and nine delegates journeyed through the mountains of the Central American country from January 3 to 12, they passed the remnants of war: the rusting husks of tanks lined the roads and gun turrets peppered the coastal heights.

The impoverished nation has been wounded repeatedly in recent decades, from the civil war in the late 1970s that brought the Sandinistas faction to power, through almost a decade of fighting with U.S.-backed Contras, to the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Today, it remains the poorest country in Central America.

DeSchiffart, an elder at St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont., and Cathy Finlay of Leaside, Toronto, are both retired teachers who embarked on a fair trade study tour through the church's Education for Mission department.

Bouncing on the back of an open pickup truck, they ascended lush mountains shaded by trees full of chattering monkeys. The country's highlands have a cooler climate and plenty of shade; both necessary things for growing coffee, a cash crop popular

among Nicaraguan farmers.

At Cosatin, a coffee growing cooperative near Boaco, about two hours northeast of Managua, the group gleaned the last of the season's red coffee fruit and helped to pulp it. The pulp would be used to make fertilizer, and the pits or coffee beans were sent to a processing cooperative where they were dried and evaluated for quality.

**Under a fair trade model, producers receive a higher return on the sale of their goods**

"There were nine of us picking coffee for one hour," DeSchiffart jokingly told national office staff during a March presentation. "We picked only \$3 worth of coffee. Six of us were 'fired.'"

Under a fair trade model, producers receive a higher return on the sale of their goods, and in order for products to be fair trade certified, they must be produced according to higher social and environmental standards.

In Ocotal, a small northern city near the Honduras border, delegates met with representatives from Presbyterian-supported Soynica, a non-profit organization that works with just over

Left: A boy guards his father's fruit at the side of the road. Right: Delegates prepare for a bumpy journey.



PHOTOS BY JOHAN DESCHIFFART



900 farming families in some of the country's poorest regions.

"Rio Abajo, a small community of 88 families, was one of the areas of Nicaragua devastated by Hurricane Mitch," Cathy Finlay said. "As our bus turned off the paved highway onto the dirt road leading into the community, the red of the bricks reminded us of P.E.I. Further into the valley, lush fields of red beans appeared, vibrant green against the browns of the ascending mountains."

Rio Abajo has no electricity; the only running water is used for irrigation, so household water is carried from the fields in pails. Local farmers grow diverse crops including carrots, avocados, papayas, mandarins, lemons and bananas. Fields are ploughed with the aid of oxen, meaning each takes days of work.

But when the villagers threw a party for their guests, "the gap between cultures seemed to disappear," said DeSchiffart. "The smiling and laughing faces gave each of us a feeling that as human beings, we are all connected."

Fairtrade products, including coffees, teas, flowers, cotton, and chocolate can be purchased from specialized shops or found in many supermarkets. For more information on fair trade products in Canada, see [transfair.ca](http://transfair.ca). ■

A street musician plays in Jinotega.



Presbyterians across Canada have contributed over \$1.4 million to life-saving relief and rehabilitation work in Haiti. Preventing the spread of disease through proper shelter and sanitation are among the most essential needs as Haiti's rainy season approaches. Farmers also urgently need seeds, tools and fertilizers to start planting crops in order to maintain local food production over the coming months.

Please help continue this critical work in Haiti today.



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Letter from India

# "We Eat Rats"

Education is a big step in a small village. BY GUY SMAGGHE



INDIA IS A COUNTRY of contrasts. Only 50 kilometres from Chennai, one of the largest cities, lies the community of Nandambakkam. There are a dozen huts with thatched roofs and some clothes hanging from wires. Unlike many other places, there is little garbage lying around. When you are this poor, you don't have much to throw away.

As we enter the roadside settlement, I see a teenage girl teaching older women and men how to write their name on a small blackboard. They are all focused on their task, obviously giving it much importance. They are tribals, known as Irulas, and their people are mostly illiterate. They get some income by working as labourers in other people's fields and by fishing in a nearby lake.

They are also contracted out to catch snakes when people are disturbed by them. It is a special skill they have.

I sit and talk with them. They are outcasts, excluded from the rest of society, living as squatters on a piece of public land that floods during the monsoon season. At that time of year,

**They are outcasts, excluded from the rest of society, living as squatters on a piece of public land that floods during the monsoon season**

they must walk through knee-high water in order to access their houses on little islands. The elder tells us that he would like to see some landfills to prevent flooding. They also tell us they eat rats from nearby fields, and that

they are tasty. They think nothing of it, but in my mind I think, these are the people that we are called to work with.

Presbyterian World Service and Development partners with two local organizations, the Institute for Development Education and Roofs for the Roofless, to reach out to the Irulas, starting with basic education, health care and assistance organizing themselves so they can access services for the settlement. A women's association has already managed to get drinking water supplied to the community as well as electricity for one light.

Deivananagi is a teenage girl hired to teach her neighbours how to read and write and to be a night school teacher for the children. She has been working for a year now. Having completed grade eight, she is one of the better-educated people in the village.

I feel proud to be working with partners just as dedicated as we are at PWS&D. I can see that young children will now have a better chance to get through school. They might get opportunities for training in trades that could lead to jobs. Despite their current circumstances, the people look happy to see me and have great hopes for a better future. I look forward to going back in a few years to see how things may have improved. ■

*Guy Smagghe is senior program coordinator with Presbyterian World Service and Development, with a focus on Asia and government relations.*

Deivananagi helps teach her elderly neighbours, as well as children, how to read and write.





# Features

Theology 101:  
Where in the World is God?



## Christ in Us

WITNESSING WITH HOPE. BY DONG-HA KIM

*"I am among you as one who serves."—Luke 22:27*

Behind these comforting words exist some of the most profound foundations of ministry in the church. It is first an acknowledgement that Jesus came to earth to serve—*diakoneo*; therefore, we are challenged to be like him—*imago Christi*. That is, to witness God in Christ we begin at the profound truth (as expressed by Daniel L. Migliore in *Faith Seeking Understanding*) that Jesus Christ is "the fullest expression of what God intends

humanity to be."

And Jesus Christ is also the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4) His life, death and the resurrection is the decisive norm of both true divinity and humanity. We must witness this truth to the ends of the world. But in what way? Jesus realized for us an enviable form of relationship with God as well as with humanity in all its diversity. We remember well Paul's commentary on this, that "there are no more hierarchical orderings of Jews and Greeks, masters and slaves, males and females, but all are brothers and sisters in Christ." (Galatians 3:28)

So let us consider carefully the implications of *imago Christi*.

*Imago Christi* must form the basis from which we may witness God in Christ: Christ in God. This knowledge of Jesus Christ, which Christians ➤

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are anxious to witness, is far from academic or historical in nature. Our willingness to witness Jesus Christ stems from the fact that we hunger for the future which God promised in him. We trust that this new destiny, a new humanity, will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A lot can and must be said about witnessing God in Christ: Christ in us. It tells us, and certainly others, that our identity is shaped by our relationship with God and one another. In this sense, witnessing is an act which stems from a community and is about a community. A common theological term for community is the word *koinonia*, which is used throughout the New Testament. It is a word that speaks of our love of God and our love of neighbour. Witnessing, here, has something to do with this *koinonia*. "[Jesus], though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness." (Philippians 2:6-8) Accordingly, our response to our neighbours, via service, is a response to God's love for us. In witnessing, we respond with hope to God's graciousness toward us. In so doing, however, we are always mindful that we do not hold the last word in the destiny of humanity. We are confident that God's promises will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.

Michelle Bartel in *What it Means to Be Human* reminds us that, "God called us into existence and created us in the blessedness of true relationship with God and others." We are connected to God and to one another. When we understand ourselves in this way, as *imago Dei*, we are called to mutually give ourselves to other persons for the benefit of others. This of course can only occur in a community. We do so with the confidence of knowing that each person has been called to serve the other and is cherished by God. Being called to serve one another in the name of witnessing God in Christ is, of course, a tall order in the world in which we live. After all, we live

in a world that defines a "person" as self-sufficient in the "I" and not in a community. Kudos to Michelle Bartel for reminding us of Mother Teresa, about whose work we can never hear enough: serving the rejected, the poor and the sick! The wonder of her sacrifice has in turn attracted others to do the same. Collectively, they comprise a caring community, an existence that God intended and made possible in Jesus Christ and sealed on our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

Further scouring of the gospel lessons will reveal stories of people who have gone to extraordinary lengths to seek Christ's healing either for themselves or for their loved ones. Christ lauds the faithful to serve others in all areas of their lives, from the eye of the storm in Haiti to one's local neighbourhood soup kitchen. Through acts of generosity, compassion, commitment and hope, we are called to serve others in response to God's graciousness toward us.

Any discussions concerning our witnessing of God in Christ: Christ in us, compels us to examine God's gracious generosity toward us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We realize that we are loved so that we may love God and our neighbour. The ebb and flow of receiving and giving was meant to be part of our lives. In the words of Anthony Robinson, "we need one who teaches us the pattern of the life God intends, and we need an inspiring example of selfless love." (*What's Theology Got to Do With It?*) Sunday school children are taught that Jesus is our example in all we do, in noticing people all around us who might not be able to help themselves. They are also taught Jesus' own words: "I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:27)

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to serve. Help us be like you. Help us notice people who need our help and reach out to them. We do all this in your holy name. Amen. ■

Rev. Dr. Dong-Ha Kim is minister at First, Brandon, Man.





Hans Baldung Grien; 1511; Tempera and oil on wood; Overall 89.5 x 76.8 cm, painted surface 87.3 x 75.6 cm; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

# A Tale of Three Cities

AN OLD VISION GIVES HOPE OF A NEW WORLD. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

*May 9: Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5*

**P**icture an old saint named John. He lives on the rocky island of Patmos, a prisoner for his faith. Under the rule of Rome. He dreams of Jerusalem.

Those two cities are all the world to him. Rome, rotten to its core with the corruption of absolute power. Jerusalem, the city of God, with its temple in ruins and its faithful people scattered across the earth. Jerusalem is the

world he once knew. Rome is the world he knows too well. In a vision he sees Rome's defeat. He sees a new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven.

He writes to his brothers and sisters, struggling to keep the faith in a hostile world. The greatest city on earth is as good as finished. God's victory celebration has begun. Faithful people who have died are already at the party. John's fantastic visions offer his friends great hope, and challenge them to hold on to that hope with a life-grip.

New Jerusalem, where the powerful

and the poor come together to worship the Lamb of God. Where the light of truth is a beacon of welcome to all. The gates are never closed to anyone. Sin is rejected, but sinners embraced.

A new city—a new world—where no one ever doubts God is near. And, oh yes, it's a city without temples! For the whole city lives in God. Its latitude is the wideness of God's mercy. Its longitude is the height of God's joy in God's people and the depth of God's compassion.

Put people who have caught ➤



## Even now, God invites us to catch the vision of what can be

that vision in a place like second-century Rome, and there can only be trouble. These people believe all are equal, and equally loved by the one, true God. They find their security in their heavenly citizenship, not their Roman citizenship. They practice mercy and compassion. They reach out to others in ways that heal and reconcile. They celebrate God's presence everywhere.

The Christians who first find hope in John's fantastic voyage to the New Jerusalem are a struggling minority in a powerful culture that is, at best, indifferent to them and, at worst, seeks to exterminate them. Yet those Christians are convinced the world needs them, and the good news that they share. They are willing to spend their whole lives, body and soul, to live as Christ's disciples in the world.

Even now, God invites us to catch the vision of what can be. As John writes at the beginning of Revelation, a vision of things that shall surely be.

A church where the powerful and the poor come together to worship the Lamb of God. Where the light of truth is a beacon of welcome to all. The doors are never closed to anyone. Sin is rejected, but sinners embraced.

A church where no one ever doubts God is near. A church that worships God, not the idols of security in buildings, programs and tradition. Its latitude is the wideness of God's mercy. Its longitude is the height of God's joy in God's people and the depth of God's compassion.

Put people who have caught that vision in the world we know today, and there can only be redemption. These people believe all are equal, and

equally loved by the one, true God. They find their security in their heavenly citizenship, not their nationality. They practice mercy and compassion. They reach out to others in ways that heal and reconcile. They celebrate God's presence everywhere.

What a wonderful dream! And every bit of it is within our reach, if we really want it to be.

Long ago, God gave old John a vision, and that vision John gave to us. That vision is our invitation to join with God in the ongoing work of bringing in a new heaven and a new earth.

Let's dream dreams, cast and catch visions, join in God's mission, and share the celebration. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.*



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# Sharing Our Faith

[PRESBYTERIAN] FAITH WITHOUT [PRESBYTERIAN] WORKS IS DEAD. BY CLYDE ERVINE

**I** LOVE being part of the Presbyterian Church; I love the biblical basis and Christological focus of our confessional life represented in *Living Faith*. But if *Living Faith* connects us theologically, Presbyterians Sharing, the church's national fund, ought to connect us practically. I'm not sure, however, that it does. It seems to me that many congregations feel disconnected from Presbyterians Sharing, and, feeling disconnected, don't support the national and

international ministries conducted under the Presbyterians Sharing umbrella to the extent that they could. Every year, we struggle to meet the budget; in 2009 the amount given by congregations was more than \$100,000 less than expected. Now I know that many congregations gave generously and that some congregations gave sacrificially, but there are still too many congregations who remain indifferent to Presbyterians Sharing and whose support is half-hearted. While we talk loudly about

While we talk loudly about being Presbyterian, we don't always follow that through in practical ways

being Presbyterian, we don't always follow that through in practical ways.

I don't think I ever quite "got" ➤



## Presbyterians Sharing is not an abstract, boring budget cooked up by a bureaucratic, self-serving cabal based in Toronto

Presbyterians Sharing until I needed its support. In 2000, I was appointed director of pastoral studies at Presbyterian College, Montreal. For six years I was involved in the ministry of pastoral formation, helping to shape students who now serve as ministers across the denomination. But my teaching ministry was possible only because of the grant given annually to the college by Presbyterians Sharing. My point is that Presbyterians Sharing is not an abstract, boring budget cooked up by a bureaucratic, self-serving cabal based in Toronto. Presbyterians Sharing is the means which allows theological teachers to prepare future ministers for the church; Presbyterians Sharing is the

means that allows dedicated men and women to serve around the world with partner churches, the means used to produce all sorts of helpful materials that nurture the faith of the children, young people, adults, and elders of our congregations. I could go on ...

No doubt if I were in charge of the Presbyterians Sharing budget, I could find inefficiencies; I might also question the legitimacy of a program here or there, for not every issue which the denomination addresses is of vital concern to me. But surely that ought not to weaken my commitment or cause me to dilute my congregation's capacity to support it. My priorities in ministry are never going to be exactly those of

anyone else, and thankfully, the vision of the national church is more diverse than mine. I also need to make sure that my demand for the perfect doesn't get in the way of the good.

Presbyterians Sharing is an opportunity. It provides a practical means of doing what none of us can do alone. So let's all get behind it. And as we give to Presbyterians Sharing on a weekly basis, let's pray on a weekly basis for some particular ministry carried out under its umbrella. Prayer, money, local, global, faith, works—let's not separate what was intended to be integrated as one. ■

*Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine is minister at Central, Hamilton, Ont.*



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# Loving the Sermon

EVEN WHEN YOU HATE IT. BY JOHN MCTAVISH

**W**hat do you hope to receive when your minister stands up to preach on Sunday morning? A gospel message taking you deep into the heart of God's love in Christ? A prophetic declaration encouraging you to apply your faith to the burning issues of the day? A word of consolation or pastoral support? An explanation of a difficult passage of scripture? An early reprieve from a long and possibly boring dissertation?

The great theologian Karl Barth once suggested that the preacher should enter the pulpit with the Bible in one hand and the morning newspaper in the other. The sermon, in other words, needs to deliver the biblically-attested message of the gospel while at the same time relating that message to the mood and challenge of the hour.

David H. C. Read, formerly the minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, liked to say that the sermon can begin in Manhattan and move to Jerusalem or begin in Jerusalem and move to New York. The real disaster is when the sermon begins nowhere in particular, wanders all over the lot, and ends up in the familiar territory of "So what?"

It's easy for us to complain, however. The fact of the matter is that preaching is exceedingly difficult and ministers need all the help they can get. The biggest help we can offer as parishioners is by simply letting them be themselves.

Please: no comparisons with the beloved Rev. Dr. So-and-So. Or the fireball around the corner. Or the preacher who uses the lectionary. Or the one who doesn't use the lectionary.

Method is arbitrary. What counts is proclaiming the gospel with understanding and power. And every minister needs the freedom to do that in his or her own way.

Think of the differences amongst the gospel writers themselves. The nonsense, straight-to-the-point Mark; the tradition-loving Matthew; the bleeding-heart liberal, Luke; the philosophical egghead, John. The New Testament is willing to live with such differences. Why can't we?

But even allowing for a supportive congregation, what can we do when the minister's theology is out to lunch and the sermon a predictable dud?

For starters, we can focus more on the prayers and hymns and scripture readings. A bad sermon can also stimulate us to do our own thinking on the subject, perhaps even do our own research afterwards.

When the great American novelist John Updike died last year, much was written about his life and work—and not least about his lifelong practice of churchgoing. Imagine preaching to a super-perceptive writer like John Updike!

There must have been preachers who disappointed him. Indeed, Updike's fiction gives us portraits of a number of ministers who disappoint. Yet Updike himself never dropped the practice of churchgoing. He claimed he needed his Sunday fix, needed the company of fellow believers. And don't we all?

We are made for God, yes, but we are also made for one another. And part of our life in Christian community brings us into regular contact with the sermon, this strange but vital window onto God, this curious but compelling



message of judgment and grace.

The preacher is like John the Baptist, saying "Don't look at me. But do look at the one to whom I am pointing in all my weakness and confusion. 'Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world! He must increase, but I must decrease.'"

In the end, preaching is not a case of trying to impress people with verbal pyrotechnics, but of sharing the source of salvation. It's a case of one hungry beggar telling another where bread can be found.

One of Updike's ministers, Rev. James Purdy, was once asked by his denominational magazine what it was like to preach to the famous writer. Purdy first made it clear that, before God, nobody is famous. We're all hungry sinners in need of grace. Then he went on to say: "It's a joy to preach to him as a parishioner. John is a quiet and generous critic; he has a certain sparkle and twinkle in his eye so that you can tell when you're on. And when you're off, he masks it well."

Would that every parishioner were as generous, and every preacher as deserving of that appreciative sparkle and twinkle in the eye. ■

*Rev. John McTavish lives in Huntsville, Ont.*





The author at a Sunday school picnic in the summer of 1955.

# Presbyterian Girlhood

A LOOK AT CHURCH LIFE IN THE 1950s. BY LEE SIMPSON

**“IF ONLY** your mother wouldn’t show it off before she cooks it!” This was my father’s weekly lament about the Sunday routine in my grandparents’ front room. My parents, my baby sister and I, aged five, dutifully assembled, ready to walk the city streets to church with my mother’s family. They lived two doors down in that leafy Toronto neighbourhood of the 50s. My Nana had just presented for inspection a generous joint of beef, latent with savoury, juicy promise. Momentarily, she would put it in that massive black-

and-white oven. All was prepared for a proper lunch on our return: roast, Yorkshire pudding, carrots, parsnips, boiled potatoes and a sweet. The problem was, this gathering took place at 10:00 a.m. and we did not eat until 1:30 p.m. That cut of beef was about to be subjected to a heat that would have done justice to a 19th-century Presbyterian hellfire. Aberdonian tastes for meat reduced to its grey and stringy components and vegetables boiled beyond recognition had survived the 1905 emigration to Canada by my grandparents.

In my memory, the sun always streams through the stained glass “Jesus and the children” window and we always sing #1, *The Holy Trinity*. The childrens’ hymn that a hundred children proudly march to is always *Jesus Bids Us Shine*. The Sunday school teachers of those days are forever beaming and there are homemade goodies: the first time I tasted a chocolate chip cookie was at Sunday school, as close to an understanding of manna as a five-year-old could get!

There was a felt board with cloth figures of the apostles, olive trees and



rowboats: if you hadn't missed class lately, you might be picked to reverentially press on the piece representing Christ. The older children had graduated to a sand table with plaster figures of camels, sheep and Moses and, in my mind, a stream of real water—can that have been possible? As we left, church papers with games, puzzles, lists of possible pen pals from faraway places and suitable stories were pressed into our hands.

We rejoined our parents for the recessional. It is neither theologically sound nor politically correct, for me, a United Church minister, to confess, but my favourites remain those sturdy, utterly singable hymns. *The Son of God Goes Forth to War*, *Onward Christian Soldiers* and *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*. The church militant held far greater attraction than the difficult or soppy hymns for children: *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and *God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall*.

Afterwards, on the lawn, we mingled. The strict atmosphere of the sanctuary discouraged conviviality; it bubbled up in the narthex. First though, the weekly gauntlet: a small hand and a polite "thank you" were extended to the black-robed minister. He was a daunting figure, ancient to my child's eye, probably 50 with a thick Scottish accent and always addressed as "Doctor." A more formal time this: my grandmother, a formidable woman, was never "Margaret" to the ladies, but "Mrs. Allen." Nearby, my more approachable grandfather

was clapped on the back and hailed as "George" by his fellow elders. My parents were swallowed up by the crowd and we ran about as if released from bondage.

After walking home (we never "took the car out" on Sundays), we did not change, but played quietly indoors in our Sunday dresses and Mary Jane shoes. Puzzles and reading were sanctioned, playing cards banned. I recall pointing enviously at friends outside playing one bright Sunday. Nana joined me at the window and told me sternly, "Those children are United."

Though the battles of union had been settled 30 years before, you would never have known it in that dining room. We were joined by fellow Scots, all Presbyterians who had resisted the blandishments of union. It remained a topic of conversation. My family were holdouts who subsequently left the very church building where my pals worshipped; we avoided it en route to our own church. There was lingering bitterness over a certain baptismal font left behind ... it was built with granite imported from Aberdeen by my grandmother's "people."



Top: A 1955 trip to Scotland to visit family. Mum is wearing an outfit made by Nana; I appear to be totally tartan. Bottom: Christmas 1957 with Dad, Mum, baby sister, grandfather's back and the top of my six-year-old head.

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Nana's lack of interest in the domestic was not the most interesting thing about her. She was passionately intrigued by the issues of the day; devoted to the Red Cross and to "keeping the Sabbath" free from commercialism. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was her dearest cause; my grandparents were acquainted with Robert and Nellie McClung. The McClungs stayed with them on at least one of their jaunts east. There is a tale, perhaps apocryphal, that while the women were rallying the WCTU, my grandfather and Mr. McClung "would take a wee drop." My family did not totally abstain. Though I never saw beer or wine in that home, good Scots whiskey was considered acceptable, virtually medicinal.

Looking back, one tends to add rose to those sepia-toned photographs. These selective observations of a darker nature are provided less to explain away than to explore the

dissonance between the words we sang: "Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight," and the world as a child experienced it. I recall my elegant grandmother sniffing at a woman in a fur coat that Nana considered seasonally unsuitable. "She must be Catholic." Later, a neighbourhood friendship, sanctioned by my parents, was kept from my grandmother. She would not have approved of my knowing a Ukrainian girl.

One family disagreement breached the pews. My parents' best friends, Harry and Eve Cohen were Jews; Eve a child refugee of the Holocaust. Seder suppers were shared at their house. They brought the best presents on Christmas Eve. My parents' wish to name them guardians in their will was relayed to the family lawyer, a fellow church member. He refused to draw up the clause that might see us go to a Jewish home. My parents changed lawyers and never spoke to

this man again.

This dark side of a warm and loving, shortbread-scented community was not informed by church-sanctioned orthodoxy. It was simply the temper of the times. Moving to a country on the other side of the globe, two World Wars and church union; too much change had been asked of my grandparents' generation. They simply balked at more. Ironically, both my aunt and uncle, companions of those Sunday walks, married into the Roman Catholic faith in the 60s. My grandparents lived to see their grandsons and loved them fiercely. Change was not elected, but an enforced condition and with Scots-Canadian forbearance, they sighed and ultimately smiled upon it. ■

*Rev. Lee Simpson is currently on staff at the United Church Observer (after serving charges in Toronto and Newfoundland).*

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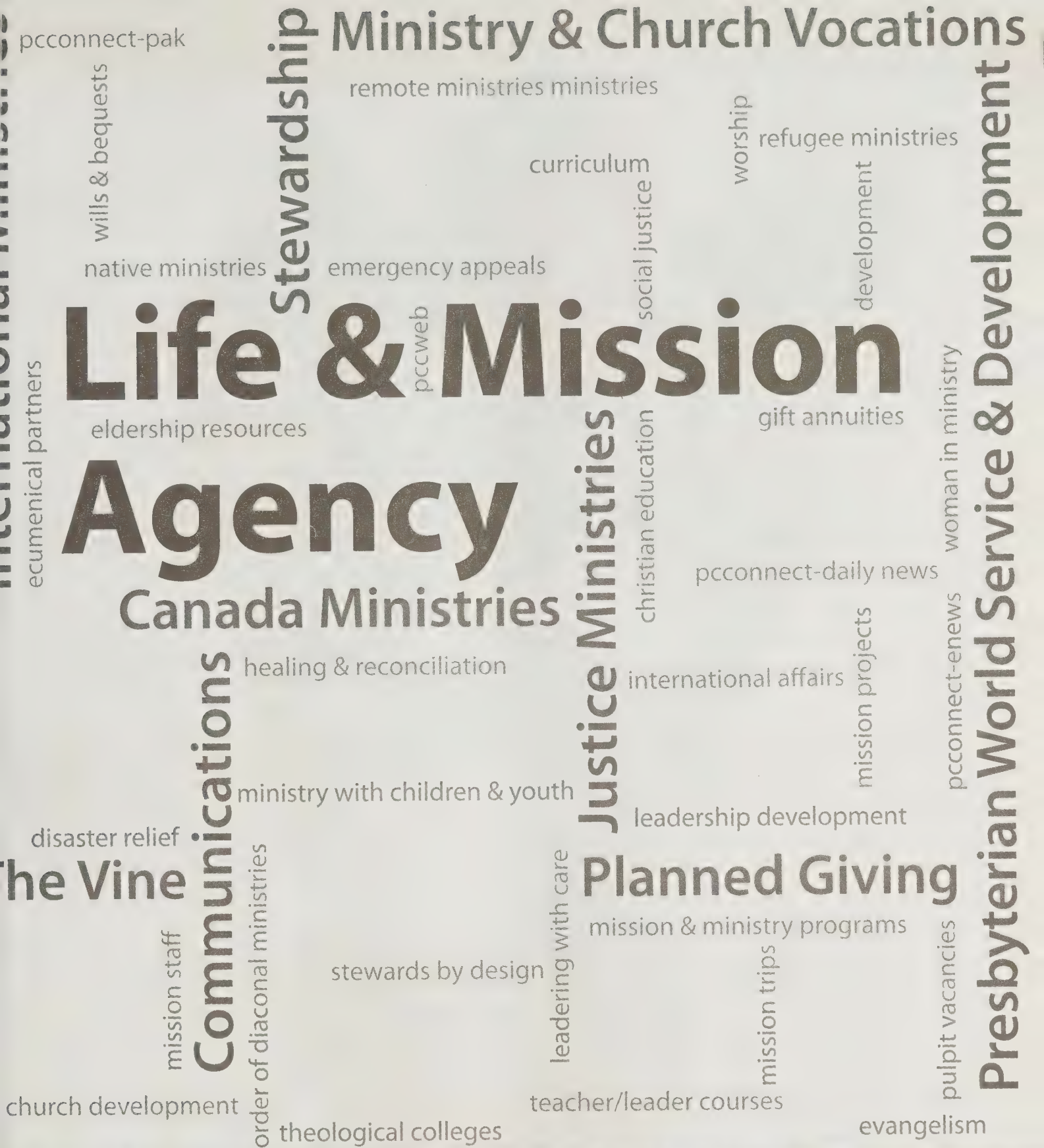
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# Defined by Generosity

## A PRIMER ON STEWARDSHIP

BY HERB GALE

**IN THE GREAT HALL** of the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa there is an epitaph for an aboriginal leader named Chief Clelamen:

In Memory of Chief Clelamen  
who died 1893 aged 50  
He was honest and well disposed and respected  
by both whites and Indians  
In Dec. 1892 he gave away, with the help  
of his sons Alexander and Johnny,  
property in blankets, canoes, etc.  
valued at \$4,000 dollars,  
this being his eighth large potlach  
and feast he had held.

No other information is provided on the sign. I am struck by the fact that Chief Clelamen was not remembered for his great accomplishments—there was no mention in his obituary of the archery competitions he had won or the number of beaver pelts he had accumulated. He is remembered simply for what he had managed to give away during the course of his lifetime—\$4,000

worth the year before he died. Truly, Chief Clelamen's life was defined by his generosity.

Potlaches were a vital part of the culture of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest. The potlach ceremonies included songs and dances and storytelling, but the main purpose of a potlach was the redistribution of wealth. The more the hosts were able to give away, the more highly they were esteemed. According to Wikipedia "potlatching was made illegal in Canada in 1885, largely at the urging of missionaries and government agents who considered it 'a worse than useless custom' that was seen as wasteful, unproductive and contrary to 'civilized' values."

I am saddened that potlaches were banned by the Canadian government, and I am even more saddened by the part that the church played in the ban. The legislation banning potlaches robbed the aboriginal peoples of an important part of their culture. But I am convinced that banning potlaches was also a loss for Canadian culture as a whole, for no culture can grow and prosper without ►



## STEWARDSHIP IS ORGANIZING OUR LIFE SO THAT WE CAN GIVE IT AWAY

a spirit of generosity like that expressed by the potlatch ceremonies.

A MAN ONCE SHOUTED out from the crowd while Jesus was teaching, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." (Luke 12:13) Jesus' response to the man is interesting. He

responds by offering the man a bit of pastoral advice: "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15)

It is advice we desperately need to hear today, for our modern North American civilization teaches us just the opposite. Our society teaches us that our lives are defined by what we manage to accumulate. We live in a culture that lures us on with dreams that we will be happy and secure only when we have more than we have now: a bigger house, a better paying job, a better spouse, a more expensive car, you know, MORE. Theologian Mary Jo Leddy calls this the "Empire of More," which reigns over the hearts and minds of so many people today and which makes us constantly dissatisfied with what we have so that we are always left itching for more. What is the point of it all? MORE! The problem is, the more we have, the more we want. We are never satisfied. The Avett Brothers speak to this predicament poetically in their song, *Ill With Want*:

*I am sick with wanting,  
and it's evil how it's got me  
And every day is worse than the one before.  
The more I have, the more I think  
I'm almost where I need to be  
If only I could get a little more.*

I AM MORE AND MORE CONVINCED that the meaning of our lives can only be found not in what we manage to accumulate but in what we manage to give away. It is only in adopting a lifestyle of generosity that we will discover the true purpose of our lives. That is because we were made to give: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only son." (John 3:16) In other words, we were created in the image of God, and the God who created us is a generous God. The God we come to know in Jesus Christ is the God who, like Chief Clelamen, is defined by generosity. By definition, love ceases to be love unless it is shared and given away. Try to hold on to love, and like the manna the Israelites collected in the wilderness, it rots and goes bad.

ONE OF THE BEST DEFINITIONS I have ever heard of stewardship is also the shortest: "Stewardship is organizing our life so that we can give it away." When my father learned that he was dying of cancer, some years after my mother died of cancer, the first thing he did was go to his desk and look through his files. He wanted to make sure that everything was in order before he died. After rummaging through his papers, he finally found what he was looking for—his Last Will and Testament. He called me into the living room to read it aloud to me. With every name he mentioned as a beneficiary of his estate, he would cry. When he came to the

## SHARE, SAVE, SPEND: TEACHING STEWARDSHIP AND GENEROSITY

**1** If you give your children an allowance, give it to them in portions of 10, so they learn the meaning of tithing and cultivate the habits of Share, Save, Spend, with instructions that one-tenth is to put into their savings and one-tenth is for them to give to the church. The rest is for them to spend any way they want. (If your church doesn't provide offering envelopes for children, let your minister

and/or session know you would like them.)

**2** Volunteer time as a family to a charity in your community (like a local food bank, a Habitat for Humanity build or Meals on Wheels). Such first-hand experiences can be transformative for everyone involved.

**3** Once a year for some special occasion (like a

birthday or Thanksgiving), give a child in your life a larger sum of money (like \$100) with instructions for them to choose any charity or philanthropic purpose on which to spend it. They get to do the research and then choose who their beneficiary will be. After they give their gift, let them share with you the reasons for their decision and how it felt for them to be able to give. (The Gifts of

Change catalogue would be a helpful research tool.)

**4** Set up a donor advised fund, which is like a trust fund, through your local bank. All principle contributions are eligible for a tax receipt. Annual income earned by the fund can be distributed to registered charities. Make this an annual family activity to raise awareness of philanthropy. ■



names of his three sons, he could read no further; overcome with emotion, he began to sob. At that moment, I realized that my dad had worked his entire life in order to be able to provide a legacy for those he loved.

Let me repeat: Stewardship is organizing our life so that we can give it away. The communion table we gather around is really God's potlatch for God's people—that banquet of God's grace in which God holds nothing back and gives everything away, including His only Son. It is God's generosity we feast on every time we celebrate communion. That's why Paul was so upset with the way the Corinthian church was celebrating the Lord's Supper. Everyone brought their own portions, with the result that the wealthier members of the congregation became stuffed on food and drunk with wine, while their poorer brothers and sisters went away hungry. "And you call that the Lord's Supper!" Paul exclaims in anger. "When you come together, it is not really the Lord's Supper you are eating," (1 Corinthians 11:20) Paul insists. It is a sham and causes more harm than good.

**THE GOSPEL IS NOT OURS TO KEEP**—it is ours to share. Our wealth is not ours to keep—it is ours to share. Our life is not ours to keep—it is ours to share. Through the deeds we do day by day that give shape to the hope within us—through the gifts we give, both large and small—we can have a part in shaping the kind of people we will become and the kind of church, the kind of world, our children and grandchildren will inherit. May we dare to follow in the way of Jesus Christ and the way of Chief Clelamen. May we, too, learn to give, give, give, so that our lives, like theirs, are defined by generosity. ■

*Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is the associate secretary for Planned Giving.*

## HOW DO WE GIVE?

### INTENTIONALLY AND FREELY:

"Each of you must give as you have made up your own mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion ..."

—2 Corinthians 9:7

### PROPORTIONALLY:

"For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has — not according to what one does not have." —2 Corinthians 8:12

### OFF THE TOP:

"On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn ..."

—1 Corinthians 16:2

### GRATEFULLY:

"For who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

—1 Chronicles 29:14

### CHEERFULLY:

"God loves a cheerful giver." —2 Corinthians 9:7

## MEG & NICOLE: A LESSON IN PHILANTHROPY



**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL** in Bethel Church, Scotsburn, N.S., was collecting 200 pounds of food for the local food bank. Meg Maxner and Nicole Robinson were having a joint party at the local swimming pool to celebrate their sixth birthdays. "Why don't we invite our friends to bring donations for the food bank rather than presents?" And that is just what they did.

The following Sunday, Meg and Nicole rolled their wagons, piled with 174 pounds of birthday "gifts," down the aisle during the offering amidst applause from the congregation. A total of 370 pounds of food were sent to the food bank. ■

*Bethel, Scotsburn, is a member of the ProVisionaries Network, a network of congregations who covenant to make planned giving an integral part of their stewardship and mission. Using planned giving strategies, they recently raised over \$100,000 to establish a permanent fund for Christian Education. With the fund they were able to hire a part-time staff worker to launch a mid-week children's ministry. To learn how your congregation can join the network, contact the Planned Giving Office.*



# Stewards of God's Gifts

## LESSONS FROM THE AIDS CAMPAIGN

BY KAREN PLATER

**I NEVER THOUGHT** that it would be easier to talk about sex in the church than it would be to talk about money. After all, Jesus had a lot more to say about our relationship with money and possessions than he did about sex, so it would seem like a natural topic for the church. But when I moved into the stewardship portfolio after years of working on the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, I discovered that people are more uncomfortable talking about money. What I learned working on the AIDS campaign prepared me for work in stewardship.

A steward is someone who manages resources on behalf of another; and although it's getting a bit of a rebirth in the secular world—both in the environmental movement and non-profit and corporate boardrooms—it is still little understood.

The biblical concept of stewardship is rooted in the belief that we are to manage the resources God has given us—time, talent and treasure—in ways that reflect God's purpose. In the church, there has traditionally been an emphasis on tithes and offerings. However, just as the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS are complex, varied and diverse, with a quagmire of causes and effects, stewardship is about more than encouraging people to put money on the offering plate; it is also about how we use all of our resources, and what values that use reflects.

**DISCOVERING THE CHALLENGES.** Much of what Jesus taught about our relationship with money and possessions was, and still is, countercultural to the messages we hear in society. Contrast the words of Christ about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field in Matthew 6:26-33, with the constant messages we hear that we need to buy more, newer, better. Consumer culture impacts our spiritual life, as peer pressure and advertising drive our decisions around consumption.

It is easy to think, "I don't have enough to give, I will give later." The brilliance of the principle of the tithe—giving a proportion of your income to God first, before all else—is



Propped up against the wall of her house in Malawi, Mary Mpata thanks her home-based care volunteers who are supported by PWS&D.

it shows that every person is capable of sharing, according to their means. But how and why we give is rarely talked about in our churches, let alone our society. Unfortunately, too many churches, particularly churches in financial crises, tend to focus energy and dialogue on the church's need to receive, rather than the spiritual benefits of giving or the social and spiritual implications of consumerism.

**BUCKING THE TRENDS.** When I visited congregations to talk about the AIDS campaign, I thought people would be squirming in their seats as we talked about sex. I was often surprised that people wanted to talk about it and that talking about it made the church relevant. Embracing the prophetic voice that cries for alternatives in our consumer-driven society and helps us rediscover a culture of generosity can be another way for the church to be relevant today.

In the AIDS campaign, people discovered that giving was one way to respond to a horrific epidemic. Called to give, compelled to give, people found many different ways to be part of the campaign. People gave money as they were able—from a few loonies to donating stock worth hundreds of thousands. Some shared what they learned, raising awareness about the issue. Others gave time to work with people affected and advocated for change. Some organized walks, concerts,



# ADJUSTING OUR PRIORITIES

## THE ROLE MONEY PLAYS IN OUR LIVES

BY KAREN PLATER

ACCORDING to the Vanier Institute of the Family, in the past decade the debt per household for Canadian families has advanced by 45 per cent, with a debt to income ratio currently at 145 per cent. At the same time, there has been a steady decline in the savings rate in the past two decades. (The current recession did see the saving rate move from two per cent to five per cent, but it is still significantly less than it was a decade ago.)

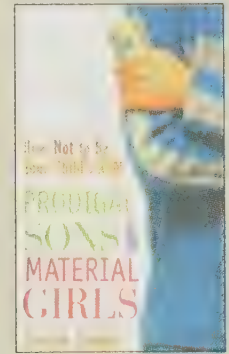
Add to this a new report, *A Canadian Culture of Generosity* by Cardus, a think tank on social innovation, which shows "that while many Canadians are very generous, the great majority of citizens donated very little or nothing throughout the year." Cardus found 10 per cent of givers account for two-thirds of all charitable donations. In addition "many who have the means to give do not

appear to give much."

In his book, Nathan Dungan has written a compelling argument for the connections between increased debt load, decreased saving, minimal philanthropy and our society's obsession with consumption. He argues that from a young age we are bombarded with messages to start spending and never stop. These messages have us struggling to differentiate between the things we need and those we want and too easily embracing debt to get both.

His book argues that we need to go back to first principles when it comes to money—teaching our youth to share, save and spend. He offers practical ways for us to ensure that our financial habits reflect our values. He sees a role for the church to "inspire young people to question the social implications of blatant consumer

manipulation." He argues that it is time for our values, rather than peer pressure and advertising, to drive our decisions around consumption. "By adjusting our priorities, we can both help more people through sharing and help ourselves by clarifying the role money plays in our lives." ■



**Prodigal Sons and Material Girls:**  
How Not to Be Your Child's ATM  
by Nathan Dungan. Wiley.

art shows and talks. It not only made a difference in the lives of the people who received, it made a difference in the lives of the people who gave.

In Malawi, I was taken to the home of a woman being cared for by home-based care workers supported by the AIDS campaign. Two of her children watched from a distance as we bent down to enter the low-slung door of her house. Her eldest daughter propped her up against a wall. She didn't have much strength to talk, but she wanted to thank us for supporting the volunteers who brought her medicine, cut her firewood, helped her with the children. These volunteers didn't have much themselves—but they shared what they had even if it meant they all went a little hungry at times. They were stewards of God's gifts. ■

*Karen Plater is associate secretary for Stewardship: Using God's Resources to do God's Mission. The AIDS campaign raised over \$1.6 million.*

## REMEMBERING AUNT VERA

BY MARK GEDCKE

**A**unt Verna had the gift of hospitality. When you visited with her, you always felt affirmed. She was a good listener. I think the care she showed in trying to understand others and affirming them was at the core of who she was. She was genuinely interested in others. She had a real generosity of spirit.

My aunt graduated from Ewart College in 1962, but instead of becoming a diaconal minister, she taught in the public school system. She lived out her faith and shared it in a very natural way.

Aunt Verna told me, after she became seriously ill, that she was including a bequest for the Presbyterian Church in her will and she wanted me to decide how the money should be apportioned. I felt deeply affirmed by her giving me this responsibility. I consulted with my brother, Brian about how to distribute her gift. We eventually decided to disburse her gift as follows: First, we established a bursary at Knox College in my aunt's name. The bursary is based on need, not academic achievement. Then we divided the remaining portion among Presbyterian World Service and Development's Loaves and Fishes Fund, Southgate Church in Hamilton, Ont., and Calvin, Kitchener, Ont., where I serve as minister. It really helped simplify things for us that the PCC offered to act as the channel for the various beneficiaries.

My aunt was 83 years old when she died. She wanted to support both her family and the larger church and world. The fact that she set aside money in her will for needs in the world didn't surprise me. She was very generous in life; it is only natural she should be generous in death. ■

*Rev. Mark Gedcke is minister at Calvin, Kitchener, Ont.*



# Thirst for the Gospel

## STEWARDSHIP IS DRINKING DEEPLY FROM THE WATERS OF GOD

BY RONALD E. VALLET

**“THINK OF US IN THIS WAY**, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.”—*1 Corinthians 4:1*

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”—*1 Peter 4:10*

In these early years of the 21st-century, the time seems right to probe more deeply into the terms “steward” and “stewardship.” The role of the steward in the Christian faith is not often expressed in explicit terms that use the word “steward.” Yet, as Old Testament scholar, Bruce C. Birch wrote:

The concept of the steward is amazingly comprehensive ... Consider the concept of covenant community... The various elements of covenant responsibility (economic, political, social, religious) are all related to a trust from and accountability to God as the sovereign covenant partner. And this covenant responsibility can only be discharged as a corporate community, responsible to God and neighbour.

Birch goes on to note that the narrow restriction of stewardship to budget and fundraising still afflicts many in the church.

Making the point from the secular side, a study of members of the Forbes 500 wealthiest people in the world revealed they were only a tiny bit happier than the public as a whole. Why? The study’s author concluded that “the wealthy often continue to feel jealousy about the possessions or prestige of other wealthy people, even large sums of money may fail to confer well-being.” It’s called keeping up with the Joneses.

Referring primarily to the 20th century, Loren Mead, founder of the Alban Institute, pointed to a partial success of stewardship methodologies in these words:

Techniques of stewardship have helped us fund the church and its ministry for a century. These techniques have made possible miracles of mission. These techniques have undergirded strong and vibrant

institutional forms of enlarging ministry. In the coming generations, as financial resources continue to diminish, more and more pressure will be put on stewardship to respond to financial crises.

While there is much truth in Mead’s words—techniques of stewardship did help fund the church and many of its ministries for a century—it is also true that the success was never as complete or as long-lasting as his words might suggest. The more common story of stewardship has been of disappointments and frustrations experienced by denominational and other stewardship officials who were charged with funding the ministries of the church. When Mead wrote of “more and more pressure [being] put on stewardship to respond to financial crises,” one might think the primary role of stewardship is to fund the ministries of the church. If stewardship leaders accept this assumption, overall results will continue to be as unsatisfactory as they have been for the past several centuries. I am not ready to accept this assumption.

**HOWEVER**, elsewhere, Mead corrects this when he contends that “the issue is not really money or budgets, but the deep anxieties and fears we have about our relationship with God ... The real work of stewardship is to help us grow spiritually.”

But the question lingers: What does it mean to grow spiritually? This leads to an even more basic question: Is there a deeper understanding of stewardship that is not based on some combination of external rules or obligations, that does not rest on funding the institutional church, that is not necessarily an expression of thanksgiving, and that underlies an understanding of covenant based on obedience and promise? My conclusion is that the answer to each part of this question is a resounding “yes.”

Mead’s words also described a critical spiritual anxiety. He wrote that “‘wealth’ and ‘money’ are key words to the critical spiritual anxiety of almost everybody in every



congregation in the country." He continued, "our tools of stewardship (all of them that I know of) fail to take into account the deeply spiritual dilemmas we each hear in how we relate to what we have and whose we are." In these words, I think that Mead is squarely on target.

This view about critical spiritual anxiety resonates with the words of Walter Brueggemann. In an important address given at Trinity Presbyterian, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996, Brueggemann described the experience of being pulled in two directions, or being haunted by two different versions of one's life. His address described two stories that operate in his life:

"One story that competes for our loyalty is the money story. But we also know about and take seriously a different account of our lives, the story of the gospel."

**THE MONEY STORY**, he said, is "the story of self-sufficiency and merit and being safe on our own terms." The sign of this story is more. It insists that no matter how much one gathers together, it is not yet enough for happiness and safety. "The outcomes of this story are anxiety and worry." At this point, both Mead and Brueggemann have similar analyses of the human condition: a symptom of the quest for money is a critical spiritual anxiety.

But Brueggemann then described in detail the second story, the story of the gospel: "It is an account of God's generosity that we are able to see in the mystery of God's creation, that we know crucially in God's love in Jesus of Nazareth, and that we trust because we have experienced it in intimate, concrete ways in our own lives."

He continued, indicating that the sign of this alternative story is baptism. "The outcome of the story is a life of communion with God shaped like gratitude, a capacity for deep generosity because all that we have is a gift, and a valuing of neighbour, whereby we live to transform our world into a viable neighbourhood where justice and mercy for all brothers and sisters is assured."

The first story of anxiety and greed—the money story—has great power and is the dominant story of our culture.

The question then is how do we move our lives toward the second story? Brueggemann said: "The move from the story of anxiety to the story of generosity does not happen by accident or by osmosis. It happens by intentional resolve and by incremental discipline. It happens not only with our money but with every aspect of our lives."

**HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?** Brueggemann proposed a way, one with which I resonate and that, in my view, has major implications for what it means to be a steward of the gospel. He listed three dimensions of what it means to be imbedded in the gospel story:

1. The God with whom we want to live is a God of deep love, but also of great demand.
2. What God cares for is the world. God cares for every crea-

ture in creation, and intends that every creature must have the safety and dignity of a full life.

This is also a point that Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall has made consistently, both in writing and in conversations of which I was a part, declaring that God's passion is for this world and that we are called to live in this world. In his seminal 1982 publication, *The Steward*, Hall wrote:

This world, for all its pain and anguish of spirit, in spite of its injustice and cruelty, the deadly competition of the species and their never-wholly-successful struggle to survive—this world is the world for which God offered up "His only begotten Son." It was precisely the belief in a God crucified that gave Bonhoeffer the courage to go to his own death affirming the life of the world.

3. Communion with God and generosity for the neighbour are linked to our baptismal sense of self. "The community of the baptized believes that God, in the very mystery of creation, has created us to be giving, caring, sharing, generous creatures. That is who we really are! Stewardship, thus, is a practice of our true selves.

Drawing from his observations of commercials during the time of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and also from his trip to Kruger National Park in South Africa, Brueggemann talked first about commercials that had the theme "Follow Your Thirst." His point was that the underlying motif of the commercial was to urge more—"more thirst, more drink, more self-indulgence, more satisfaction."

Psalm 42 begins with the metaphor of a deer thirsting for water. The psalmist links this deep thirsting with the believer yearning for communion with God the way that a deer yearns for water.

As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.

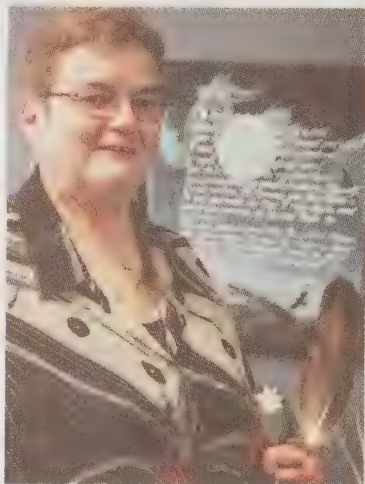
—Psalm 42:1-2

The story of the gospel, of which baptism is the sign, is that our true thirst is for God. In Brueggemann's words, "That is who we truly are, and only that will quench." But there is danger and risk in coming to the waterhole, as Brueggemann observed in a visit to Kruger National Park. When an animal leans down to drink, it is vulnerable, off-guard and easy prey. But because the thirst is so great, the animal must come despite the danger.

For those who are baptized, there are also dangers and risks that must be taken. Because it is the waterhole of the gospel, when we drink there "God will draw us into new purposes that will be costly and demanding. Drinking there will change our lives." ➤



# BUILDING HOPE



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## COVER PACKAGE Stewardship

**A PROPOSED DEFINITION OF STEWARDSHIP**  
Brueggemann defined stewardship as “a resolve to move beyond the tale of anxiety.” His definition is more a verb than it is a noun! He noted that stewardship is not about cunning budgets. It is about our true selves. Where does this leave us? Here are my conclusions:

Though stewardship relates strongly to one’s attitudes about money and possessions, it is not about funding institutions or ministries, even those of the church. The words of Douglas John Hall are instructive in this regard:

What if the mission itself requires something like the biblical metaphor of the steward if it is to be grasped imaginatively and engaged in faithfully? What if at least part of what is intended by the overall theme of these issues—“North America as Mission Field”—demands of us that we take up this metaphor and incorporate it into our theology of mission as such? What if stewardship, instead of just being the means of our mission, were a vital dimension of its end—that is an indispensable aspect of what Christian mission actually is.

Stewardship relates to a theological imperative; it is not based on legal or

mandatory obligations. It originates inside a person and compels him or her to act.

Though stewardship can relate to a feeling of gratitude to God, it is not based on pressures, such as guilt or pressures of feeling obligated to express thanksgiving.

Stewardship is not based on motivations such as responding to promises of prosperity or favouritism.

Stewardship is based on the human being’s need for God, which can be described as an all-consuming thirst. It is a move from thirst based on anxiety and the felt need for “more,” to a thirst for the gospel of God. In the words of the prayer of St. Augustine, “You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

Stewardship then may be defined as drinking deeply from the waters of the living God by moving from the stagnating waterholes of “more” to the living water of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and inviting others to do the same. ■

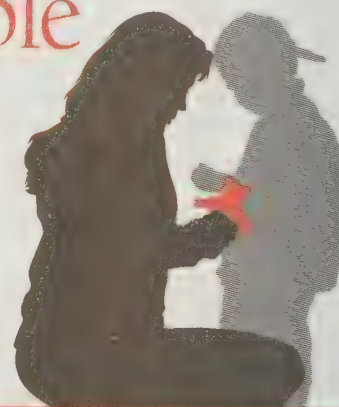
*Dr. Ronald E. Vallet is an ordained American Baptist minister and a former denominational and ecumenical stewardship official. This article is excerpted from his forthcoming book, Stewards of the Gospel, to be published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.*

## The Messy Table

An interactive column  
on parenting

By Katie Munnik

Every Monday, starting May 3rd



Join the Conversation. Be the Church.  
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# The Church Speaks

The *Social Action Handbook* can light a spark in our faith.

BY BRIAN NEILSON

*“They cut me down  
and I leap up high;  
I am the life that’ll never,  
never die;  
I’ll live in you  
if you live in me;  
I am the Lord of the  
dance said he.”*  
—Lord of the Dance

**T**he *Lord of the Dance* is one of my all-time favourite hymns. Not only does it have a beat you can dance to (although this hypothesis may go largely unproven in most Presbyterian worship services) it also evokes the Ascension of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Consequently, here the hymn brings into view the dawning of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church and it has an eye toward the beginning of the life of faith for any contemporary man, woman or child. There is an important

reciprocity at work here that is not limited to just me and Jesus though. There is also the undeniable interdependence between the individual believer and the corporate body we call church. I invite you to explore the Presbyterian Church in Canada’s *Social Action Handbook* with me as a neglected but necessary embodiment of the relationship between the one and the many, the church and the world. Whether you’re new to the faith, a born Presbyterian or somewhere in between, I believe you will get a better sense of what it means to be a Canadian Presbyterian through an engagement with the handbook whether in its classic orange binder form or the online version. My hope is that you may be persuaded to embrace the rich living ►



## The handbook is a living witness to the worldview of the PCC

witness of the PCC found there.

A distinctive feature of Presbyterianism is that its church governance is participatory, democratic and representative. The courts above session are comprised of an equal amount of ruling elders and teaching elders. It is not hard to imagine a member of St. John's, Winnipeg, for example, concerned about the use of pesticide by the city during mosquito season, asking their elder, Jane Doe, to bring it up at session. If this concern is found to have merit and thought to have an impact on other Presbyterian congregations then the session may bring it to presbytery. Coincidentally, Ms. Doe, ruling elder, may happen to be an equalizing elder for the congregation in the Presbytery of Winnipeg and thus meets the criteria for being a member of the court. If presbytery thinks the issue is of concern to the rest of the church, the court could, in turn, send it to General Assembly as an overture. If General Assembly adopts the overture to consider the issue of pesticide use in Canada as it relates to the care of God's creation then it may, in its wisdom, commend it to the Life and Mission Agency for further study or perhaps even a special committee could be struck with an eye toward updating the church's position.

**ULTIMATELY**, the member of St. John's, Winnipeg, would have the treatment of his concern about pesticide use in Winnipeg become part of the annual update of the *Social Action Handbook*. "The issues considered and the decisions made by General Assembly remind us that Christianity is a public faith that reflects the lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation." Granted pesticide use, for some, may not be deemed worthy of consideration by the courts of the church, nonetheless it is what the high court, or better the court of last appeal, does and has done in the past that constitutes the content of the *Social Action Handbook*. And it is the actual content of the book we turn our attention to now.

The handbook is a living witness to the worldview of the PCC. One of its main theological understandings is what Dr. Art Van Seters' states in his opening essay, that, "It is the very nature of God to be utterly self-giving and to be open to the other." This knowledge of God and its concomitant demands for a vibrant testimony (the life that'll never, never die) to the radical egalitarianism of the gospel for humanity comes through the handbook's five thematic books. The titles of these books are: Life, Relationships, Community, Nation and World. Its structure represents concentric circles moving outward from the level of the individual in terms of the gift of life toward ever-expanding spheres of intimacy, impact, and interest. Each

issue—from abortion to family planning, from protecting the vulnerable to caring for the planet—is addressed following a set pattern for the articles. The articles are divided into three parts: The Church Speaks, The Church Acts and The Church Reflects.

In particular, the third section recounts how the church in faith came up with its position and consequently may be the best example of where to go to gain an appreciation of the integrated view of the PCC as it accords with the various classical forms of revelation.

Take, for example, the global economic crisis and one might wonder what the *Social Action Handbook* says for and to Canadian Presbyterians, if anything. Under the section, Nation there is an entry entitled Social and Economic Issues. In the first section two of the numerous statements caught my eye. "Respect for human beings is not based on merit, but on the unmerited rights and dignity of all guaranteed by the incarnation and the grace of God." The other was, "Believers in Jesus Christ and members of his church will pray for and work at the overcoming of greed in our own lives. We realize that there are limits to what we should own and consume. We use our strengths, talents and will not merely for personal gain, but for the welfare of the community." These two statements demonstrate the solid theological understanding and biblical knowledge that our church brings to the social issues it confronts. One can almost hear the words of Jesus about specks, logs and sight.

**FURTHERMORE**, if one went so far as to check the World section, she would find an entry on Global Economic Justice where similar statements are made. Additionally, in this entry you would learn of a Bible study entitled Wisely And Fairly for the Good of All, which was created by the Committee on Church Doctrine. You could consider using it to more intentionally engage and explore your own, your youth group's or even your congregations's faith commitments. It may turn out that just such a Bible study will be the spark that lights a fire in the heart and mind of one of our brothers or sisters of faith and a brand new overture could be on its way.

"Dance, dance, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he." ■

Brian Neilson lives in Sackville, N.B., and is pursuing an M.Div. through St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology.



# Turning the World Upside Down

CAN WE HANDLE THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL? **BY HARVEY SELF**

As you read this, the Long-Range Planning Committee has just finished hosting a conference which they hope and pray will be one of those moments when our church will be “turned upside down.” The event was called the Emmaus Project. Representatives of 17 presbyteries (about 150 participants in total) from across Canada gathered with the dream to initiate a movement among Presbyterians from coast to coast that will see them “turning the world upside down.” Is this merely an exaggerated marketing ploy of the project design team or do they really believe it is possible? Having heard the team’s convener, Rev. Wes Denyer, share the dream of the Emmaus Project I am convinced that they do believe. However, I have also heard Wes share his concern that the church at large could “drop the ball” once the Emmaus Project has done its part in initiating this movement to guide a new way of seeing and a new way of believing.

I share Wes’s concern because I am well aware how easy it would be to do just that. We could very easily bury the benefits of this conference by debating and talking it to death at all the levels of church government and through the seemingly never-ending committees. We are very good at doing that. But, in doing so we will only ensure its work and insights get filed away in a dusty archive under the title, “Been there, done that, and nothing changed.” We

could study it and theologize it into the ground without experiencing one iota of its spiritual riches. We are very good at that as well. But it is also possible that we could so open ourselves to the working of the Holy Spirit that we would be ready and willing recipients of whatever the Father has in store for us in and through this timely and possibly ground-shaking initiative. We may not be quite so good at doing this. At least, I know I am not!

The story of Acts 17 tells us that the leaders of the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica knew that in their midst were real “world changers!” But they chose to have nothing to do with them. Even worse, they stirred up a riot to drive them out of their presence. There was no way that they were going to let Paul and Silas, and the gospel they preached, change their world and the world of those over whom they held spiritual authority. They would rather go down in history being known as those who refused to be part of a movement turning the world upside down. They may even have been proud of their stance.

But, what of us? Can we handle the possibility that the gospel may have that kind of world-changing impact when it is unleashed upon the human race? Or, must we feel compelled to downplay the instances in which the Good News of Jesus Christ dramatically takes hold of the world and turns it upside down?

We may have a fleeting moment in



Harvey with his mother, Christine.

CAN WE HANDLE  
THE POSSIBILITY  
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the shadow of the Emmaus Project to say to our God, “I am on side for whatever it is you are doing in our midst, in our time through the moving of your Holy Spirit. Give me grace to journey down that Emmaus road with you learning to see as we have never seen before and to believe as we have never believed before.” And do you know what just might happen? Our world might just be turned upside down. ■

Blessings,



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto**

How do you celebrate your 55th? The folks at St. Mark's did it up: With an honoured guest, the Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev. Harvey Self; and, then welcomed 12 new members, 11 by profession of faith and one by baptism. And cake of course!



## **Knollwood, London, Ont.**

Here's incentive to hold on to your subscription: Those boxes held by the young people are 100th anniversary time capsules at Knollwood sealed into a wall in February. The *Record* will follow up this story in 2110! Seen here: Rev. Lynn Nichol, Johnathan Medland, Amy Medland, Ross MacKay; seated, Margaret Gray and Nain Hain.

## **St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont.**

The congregation at St. Paul's made a donation to the Crieff Hills' fundraising campaign. Making the presentation to David Phillips, campaign chair, centre, is Calvin McDougall, left, a longtime supporter of Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre. Looking on, right, is clerk Bob Ellis.





### Knox, Oakville, Ont.

Knox was blessed with three Olympic torch runners: Gavin Browne, Jessica Bryce, and Alastair Hood. Gavin ran in Burlington, Jessica ran in Oakville and Alastair ran in Welland, Ont.

Submitted by  
Warren Browne



### St. Andrew's, Fredericton

Presenting a cheque and vouchers from St. Andrew's to the Fredericton Men's Shelter administrator, Ted Allingham, (centre left) and shift manager, Jim Axelrod, (centre right) are Celeste and Flora Hay on the left, and, on the right, Tess Dell and Alexander (Sandy) Hay. Following a five-year tradition this team gathered at the shelter the day before Christmas to sort gifts donated by Frederictonians and pack stockings for shelter residents.



### St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont.

St. Andrew's celebrated its 10th annual Robbie Burns Supper in January. Entertainment in the Scots tradition was provided by the Caledonians—who have been at all 10. Shown here are all the men who attended in kilts. The menu was roast beef and haggis with mashed potatoes, mashed turnip, peas, rolls and gravy. Instead of cake, there was Topsy Laird. Yummy!



### online extra

**SEE MORE PHOTOS ONLINE:** NINE YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN ST. ANDREW'S, BRAMPTON, ONT. ELEVEN YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN ST. ANDREW'S, WHYCOCOMAGH AND LITTLE NARROW'S PASTORAL CHARGE, BOTH IN CAPE BRETON. BIRTHDAYS, BIRTHDAYS AND BIRTHDAYS AT CALEDONIA, ONT. BURMESE KARENS IN EDMONTON—THREE GENERATIONS OF THE TOE FAMILY. AN ECUMENICAL AND JOYFUL HOLY WEEK AT ST. ANDREW'S, WESTVILLE, N.S. THE RECORD'S REV. CALVIN BROWN VISITS ST. PAUL'S, SIMCOE, ONT., AND, TWO SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES AT ST. ANDREW'S, STRATFORD, ONT.: THE CHURCH TURNS 171, AND, EARL CLARK CELEBRATES HIS 50TH YEAR AS CHURCH MUSICIAN. AND OUR MONTHLY UPDATE FROM TATAMAGOUCHE: WARM-HEARTED YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE MUFFINS FOR SHUT-INS. [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)



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## SYNOD OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Halifax, N.S.; Saint David; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-9212; lmawhinney@bellaliant.net.

Hanwell, N.B.; St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. D. E. Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; minister@sapc.ca.

Kensington and New London, P.E.I.; Interim Moderator Rev. Ian Glass, 15 Messer Ave., Charlottetown, PEI C1A 6N5; 902-892-1463; glassicjr@pei.sympatico.ca.

## SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Ingleside, Ont., St. Matthew's; Full-time, Interim Moderator Rev. Mark Bourgon; PO Box 704, Ingleside, ON K0C 1M0; 613-537-8929; markbourgon@yahoo.com.

Montreal, St. Andrew and St. Paul; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Dale Woods, 3495 University Street, Montreal, QC H3A 2A8; 514-288-5256 ext.202; dswoods2@gmail.com

Ottawa, St. Andrew's; Full-time associate minister; Interim Moderator Rev.

Susan Clarke, c/o St. Andrew's Kars Presbyterian Church, PO Box 381, Maitland, ON K0E 1T0; 613-348-3088; revsclarke@yahoo.ca.

Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Seung Kim, 5 Jamie Cres., Petawawa, ON K8H 3N2; 613-687-2463; seung37@hotmail.com.

Smith Falls, Ont., Westminster; Full-time; Interim Moderators Revs. Brian and Alison Sharpe, 460 Raglan St. S., Renfrew, ON K7V 1R8; 613-432-5452; maryalison@sympatico.ca.

## SYNOD OF CENTRAL, NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO AND BERMUDA

Ashburn-Brooklin, Burns; Full time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Lee, 2501 Warden Ave., Toronto, ON M1W 2L6; 647-290-0461; kevinmaclee@bridlewoodpc.ca.

Aurora, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 ext. 223 or 1-800-619-7301; dmuir@presbyterian.ca; standrewspresbyterian.com.

Bramalea, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 55 Edith St., Georgetown, ON L7G 3B4; 905-877-1252; stpaulspresbyterian@bellnet.ca.

Elora, Knox and Alma, St. Andrew's; Full-time two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Marty Molengraaf; mmolengraaf@sympatico.ca.

Guelph, Kortright; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Wayne Dawes, c/o Knox's Galt Presbyterian Church, 2 Grand Ave. S., Cambridge, ON N1S 2L2; 519-621-8120; sdawes@knoxsgalt.org.

Huntsville, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gary Robinson; 705-746-9612; gary@standrewsparrysound.org.

Midland, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 47 Owen Street, Barrie, ON L4M 3G9; 705-728-3991; rick@standrewsbarrie.ca.

Newmarket, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca.

Schomberg, Emmanuel; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeremy Lowther; 905-857-2419; jlowther1845@rogers.com.

Toronto, Toronto Korean; Senior Minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kyung-Seuk Min, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, ON M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963; tkpc.org.

## SYNOD OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Atwood; Interim Moderator Rev. Cathrine Campbell, PO Box 477, Brussels, ON N0G 1H0; 519-887-9831; cecampbell@wightman.ca.

Beamsville, St. Andrew's and Smithville; Interim Moderator Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi, c/o First North Pelham Presbyterian Church, 606 Metler Rd., RR 3, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0; 905-892-4716; vasar@talkwireless.ca.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Half-time; Rev. Steve Boose, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1V5; 519-245-2292; revboose@bellnet.ca.

Burlington, Burlington East; Interim Moderator Rev. George Beals, c/o Burlington East Presbyterian Church, 505 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E3; 905-575-5525; gbeals@mountaincable.net.

Crinan, Duff Largie and Argyle; Half-time

## To announce your pulpit vacancy:

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Contact the *Record* office regarding items for this column.

minister for two charges; Interim Moderators Rev. Amanda Birchall and Rev. Deb Dolbear-VanBilsen, c/o Glencoe Presbyterian Church, 177 Main St., PO Box 659, Glencoe, ON N0L 1M0; 519-287-2743; revdeb17@sympatico.ca.

Fingal, Knox; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Steeper; 519-438-3492; ksteep@elmwoodchurch.ca.

Grimsby, St. John's, Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Garfield Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church, 865 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; gghave@hotmail.com.

Hamilton, Heritage Green; Half-time; Moderator Rev. Stephen Jenvey, 262 Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E1; 905-628-6675; rev.steve@bell.net.

Hamilton, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Tom Billard, 1901 8th Concession West, RR 1, Cambridge, ON N1R 5S2; 519-621-3023; tcbillard@rogers.com.

Hamilton, The South Gate; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington, ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640; southgate.moderator@yahoo.ca.

Ilderton, Bethel; Part-time; Carl Crossett, Convener of Search Committee, 14846 Fifteen Mile Rd., RR 2, Denfield, ON N0M 1P0; 519-225-2733; ccrossett@quadro.net.

London, Oakridge; Associate Minister; Rev. Terry Ingram, 970 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1V4; 519-471-2290; tingram@oakridge.london.on.ca.

Niagara Falls, Chippawa; Assistant Minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Wally Hong; 905-358-9624; halfcrayon@gmail.com.

Normanby, Knox, Holstein, Knox and Dromore, Amos; Full-time three point charge; Interim Moderator Mark Davidson, c/o Erskine Presbyterian Church, PO Box 323, Dundalk, ON N0C 1B0; 519-923-5250; markdavidson@cablerocket.com.

North Yarmouth, St. James; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. John Bannerman, c/o Chalmers Presbyterian Church, 342 Pond Mills Rd., London, ON N5Z 3X5; 519-681-7242; jbannerman@bellnet.ca.

Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena van Zoeren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

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## SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

Regina, First; Co-Interim Moderators Rev. Ina  
Golaïy, 718 Elm Cres., Weyburn, SK S4H 0S7;  
306-842-1942; golaïy@sasktel.net and Rev.  
Devon Pattemore, 66 Park St., Yorkton, SK S3N  
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Sherwood Park, Alta., Sherwood Park; Interim  
Moderator Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf,  
c/o Dayspring Presbyterian Church,  
11445 40 Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 0R4;  
780-293-0618; dpcrev@telus.net.

## SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

No vacancies at this time.

## Ordinations, Recognitions and Transitions

St. Paul's, Mission, B.C., Presbytery of Westminster;  
Recognition Service for Rev. Don Hill,  
Interim Minister; March 7, 2010.

## Obituaries

**CRIBAR, CRAIG ANDREW**, died at Belleville  
General Hospital Jan. 8, 2010. Beloved  
husband of Marlene, loving father of  
Kimberlee (Mrs. Stewart Smith), Kyle  
(wife Linda), special grandfather of  
Taylor Smith, brother of Joan Barrett and  
the late Donald.

During his ministry of 47 years he  
served the congregations of Chauvin and  
Wainwright, Alta., St. Mark's, Orillia, St.  
Andrew's, Newmarket, Knox, Acton, St.  
Andrew's, Belleville, and St. Andrew's  
Roslin, Ont. A willing and faithful servant.



**FAIZ, JOYCE KAMLA**  
(NEE VAZIR CHAND),  
our dear mother passed away  
peacefully at her residence in

Toronto on March 17, 2010. Joyce was the  
youngest daughter of Rev. Vazir Chand  
and Mrs. Claudia Vazir Chand and sister  
to Caroline, Arthur, Joseph, Enid and  
Olive. She was the last surviving member  
of the family.

Joyce was the devoted wife of the late  
Victor Niamat Faiz; tender and loving  
mother to Andrew, Irene and Peter;  
daughter-in-laws Freya and Sasha; and  
proud and loving grandma to Zahra  
and Joshua. We shall miss you dearly.  
You were a great teacher, elder, mother,  
grandmother, aunt and friend. You will  
be forever loved.

**VANDERLAAN, ANDREW**, passed away on  
Nov. 21, 2009. A longtime member of  
Mount Pleasant Presbyterian, Mount  
Pleasant, Ont.

**WASACASE, GLORIA**, a longtime and faithful  
elder of Central, Brantford, Ont., for 20 years  
died on Oct. 13, 2009. Born in Winnipeg,

## Employment Opportunities

To feature your employment opportunity please contact Carol McCormick  
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CONTINUED  
ON PAGES  
47 & 48

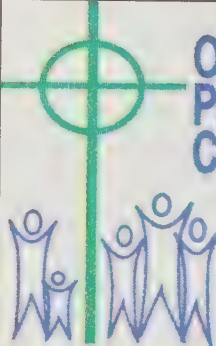
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she attended St. John's. In 1958 she received a calling to go to Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She became an elder in Winnipeg in 1973 and worked at the Kenora Fellowship Centre in 1976 and 1977. In 1978 she was elected an elder of First, Kenora, Ont. Moving to Brantford in 1984, she was an active participant in session activities and was most dedicated in all aspects of this ministry. For 10 years she was representative elder to the Paris Presbyterian and served as its first lay moderator.

Gloria was a faithful and diligent worker in the Women's Missionary Society serving in her time as president at the local, presbyterial and synodical levels and two terms on the national council. She was gifted by God to have lived in two cultures—one by birth from Scottish roots, the other by marriage into the First Nations community. A great advocate for aboriginal rights, she also served on the Healing and Reconciliation Advisory Committee. Gloria was both a speaker and a doer with strong convictions about her faith.

She is survived by immediate family members, her daughters Karen, Sheila and Allison. Her memory and her labours for the Kingdom will not fade. ■

## Summer Directory

Invite those visiting your area this summer to worship at your church by placing an announcement in our Summer Directory in the June and July/August issues.

Email Carol: [cmccormick@canadads.com](mailto:cmccormick@canadads.com)

## Director of Music

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Whitby, Ont., requires a Director of Music to start in September 2010.**

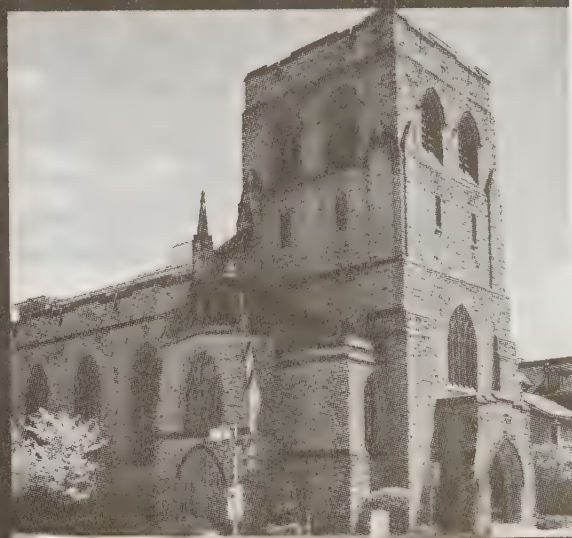
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9. T

**When the day of Pentecost had come, all the believers were gathered in one place. And suddenly ...**

Want to know what happens next? **Instructions:** In your Bible, read chapter 2 of the book of Acts. Then fill in the answers to the Pentecost Puzzle Questions below. Finally, gather the circled letters and unscramble them to find out what kind of person the Holy Spirit touches.

1. Which disciple stood and spoke to the people about Jesus?
2. In what city did the people gather for the feast of Pentecost? Look at verse 14.
3. Some people thought they heard the sound of a strong \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What do we call the "Holy" gift that was received there?
5. What did people see dancing above their heads?
6. Please fill in this blank: Pentecost is the birth day of the Christian \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Look at John 3:16 to fill in this blank: "For God so loved the \_\_\_\_\_."
8. What is an old-fashioned word for the "Holy" gift?
9. On that day people were speaking in many languages. What is another word for speak?

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## "A mother's love is a mystery and a wonder. It is the most perfect analogue of the love of God"

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

She dropped to the ground onto all fours, and ambled off into a thicket of immature fir trees. She was soon out of sight but I could imagine her looking for a bed of nice pine grass to sleep in and curling up with a great huge sigh. The cubs would stay up the tree until she told them to come down. But that's when all hell broke loose up in the Douglas fir high-rise. Seeing mama take off and leave was too much. Acting completely atypically, and bawling like three banshees, the cubs came down the 150-foot fir tree like a bunch of firefighters sliding down a greased brass pole on their way to a five-alarm blaze. They hit the ground bawling and scrambling to catch up with mom, their hind legs clumsily stretching up beyond their ears as they ran. So much for mama's snooze!

I shook my head, chuckled and continued on with my scouting tramp. Long-suffering mothers. I could think of several of the human variety that I knew, some with broods just as rambunctious as the three cubs, and bigger too. The love of a long-suffering mother, animal or human, always touches me deeply, partly because it is so profound on its own merits and partly because I never knew it directly in my own life, at least that I can remember. The young bear mom got me to thinking about it again, and oddly a Jesus story popped into mind.

Jesus is thinking about the city and its people and he says: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!" (Luke 13:34) Several chapters later, Luke continues the story: "When [Jesus] approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the

things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.'" (Luke 19:41-42)

What is so compelling in this story is the way Jesus compares his love for those who reject him to that of a long-suffering mother. He could have used my she-bear with three rambunctious cubs but he used a hen that is trying to desperately stuff her brood of rambunctious chicks under her wings instead. Whatever the metaphor, his weeping over the city drives the nail home in the message. How does Jesus relate to the lost, to those who don't know him or receive him and the salvation he brings? The point is pretty clear: with heart-rending love and tears, like a long-suffering mother. I have never really thought about it before, but this is amazing. Reformed scholar Charles Hodge wrote in the 1870s that: "A mother's love is a mystery and a wonder. It is the most perfect analogue of the love of God. As the relation in which parents stand to their children has this close analogy to the relation in which God stands to (all) his rational creatures ..."

Being somewhat of a Calvinist, I guess I have pretty much pictured Jesus relating to those who reject him and his salvation with a rather cavalier and cold attitude: "Well it was destined you know, or predestined at least." And my approach has been pretty much what I perceived his approach was, pretty cavalier and cold. But my recent bear experience that stirred Jesus' chicken story to the surface won't stand for this attitude. Over and over Jesus insists: "... the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost ... it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." (Luke 19:10 and Matthew 18:14) I have always known that. But it's the way that Jesus relates to the lost that is the shock. And if he relates

this way, as his disciple I am called to be on the road to becoming like him as I relate to these same people. I am called to be in the process of replacing my cold, cavalier complacency with a gut-wrenching, heart-rending, long-suffering mother-like love, yes even tears and grief, for the lost. This is what I am pondering this Mother's Day and it is raising all kinds of new issues and attitudes for me with regards to evangelism. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*

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# Like a Long-Suffering Mother

GUT-WRENCHING AND HEART-RENDING. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**WINTER** had been unusually long but I just had to get out in the bush. It was a case of maintaining what little sanity I had left, not to mention Linda's. So on the last day of March, with the bush roads still wearing some of the snow winter had left behind and in many places still choked with healthy drifts, I set off alone in search of a male bear for our larder. I knew no bear in its right mind would be out of bed yet but sanity could not wait. This was a scouting journey.

I had not gone far on this early spring day, dawdling along as I walked, pushing back the snow and scouting for future spring rambling and hunting possibilities. There was still lots of snow all around, especially under the trees. And that's when I ran into a small young mother bear with three yearling cubs, all carbon copies of each other. They were close, only about 20 metres away, when I bumped into them. I was completely surprised. There was no way they should have been out of bed yet; it was far too early and there was still far too much snow. Whilst I was still caught in my best bear defense—something outdoor writer and humorist Patrick McManus calls a "running stationary panic"—and before I could muster a hasty retreat of any

kind, the mother bear barked at the three cubs, swatted the last one in line on the rump and all three scrambled up a big Douglas fir tree that was right next to them. The tree had a girth of about two feet and was easily 150 feet tall. The three cubs scampered right to the top.

And then the mother bear stood up on her hind legs and, leaning against the tree with one front arm, she looked me square in the eye. I thought to myself, "Well here we go. I am about to get chased up my own tree by an angry mother bear. I hope she foregoes the swat to the rump in my case."

But rather than looking at me with the usual ferocity of a mother bear with cubs, she had this tired, kind of wrung out look that as near as said, "You have no idea what I have to endure with these three rampaging teenagers of mine." I halted my stationary panic and began to chuckle at her. She looked like a haggard mother who had been trying desperately to sleep in on a Saturday morning in spite of a set of early-rising rambunctious triplets. I said to her, "Well girl, it's real early for you to be out of bed, there is far too much snow on the ground yet. Why don't you just amble off and leave your kids up that tree and find a place to snooze."

And that's exactly what she did. continued on page 49





Stroud Harvest event featuring Rev. Mitchell, James Taylor, Rev. Douglas Ockler and Adam Davidson



Young boy playing violin



The Beautiful Church celebrated its centennial day



## Stroud Presbyterian Church, Innisfil, Ont.

SUBMITTED BY JAMES FETZKO

Stroud Presbyterian Church is a member of the United Church of Canada. We are a diverse and vibrant community of faith, serving the needs of our congregation and the wider community. Our church is located at 1000 Stroud Road, Innisfil, Ontario. We are a welcoming and inclusive church, where everyone is valued and respected. We offer a variety of programs and services, including worship, education, and social activities. We are proud to be a part of the Stroud community and to serve its needs. We are committed to the values of the United Church of Canada, including justice, peace, and the dignity of all people. We are a church that is always growing and always changing. We are a church that is always here for you.



# *A Sacred Moment for Canada*

## TIME TO ENGAGE IN THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will hold its first national event in Winnipeg, June 16-19, 2010: the first of six national and many local TRC events in the next four years.

### Be part of this national movement of healing and reconciliation:

- Attend TRC events, or watch them on television
- Work with the Aboriginal community, other churches and community groups to host local TRC events
- Pray for the work of the TRC
- Financially support and pray for the Native ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Hold services for Healing and Reconciliation in Canada between Healing and Reconciliation Sunday (May 23, 2010) and Aboriginal Day Sunday (June 20, 2010)

*Christians are called to be reconcilers between peoples*

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St. Giles', Prince George, B.C.

A handful of Six Nations protesters picketed a residential subdivision being constructed back in August 2007 in Brantford, Ont. The demonstration was intended to raise awareness about development on land that was subject to a native land claim. As Connie Purvis writes in our cover story this month, the Ontario town still has its share of conflict and frustrations.

## PROMISED LANDS 32



**On the Cover:** Background, a survey of the Six Nation Indian lands along the Grand River, completed in 1821 (Public Archives of Canada); *left*, a native protester places a flag on the Joseph Brant monument in Victoria Park (CPimages); *middle*, portrait of Joseph Brant by George Romley, 1776 (National Gallery of Canada); *right*, a construction worker tried to stop native protesters from taking down a locked gate (CPimages)





# A Time to Listen

OUR STORY IS BEING TOLD AND WE MUST HEAR IT. BY DAVID HARRIS



In our house, one of the most wonderful moments each day is reading books at bedtime to our little girl. So many books and so many stories. But my wife and I are frequently asked to make up one last story after prayers are said and the lights turned out.

The imaginary central character of these tales has a made-up name, but the story has to more or less reflect the day's events if we are to persuade the tired little listener to close her eyes in satisfaction.

Telling stories, and repeating them over and over is part of our common humanity across all cultures and across all ages. Before alphabets were invented, stories were just told.

In Hebrew scripture, the Song of Deborah in the book of Judges is a poem dating to the eighth century before Jesus' birth that tells of an event that likely took place some 400 years earlier.

So the story must have been passed from one generation to another, until people developed writing and were able to record it. And still it had been told over and over...

It's how we learn who we are. How the world is framed. What our roots are.

Even in our personal lives, stories are hugely important. Great wrongs and great triumphs are told and retold. Just think of all those family parties: Uncle Jack is telling that story for the 40th time and everyone knows the words! But it is a defining story for him and the family.

Stories are also important for dealing with hurts. They are so powerful that we often bury stories of terrible abuse because the pain of recalling

them is too great.

But being able to tell those painful stories in a supportive setting is also recognized as crucial to healing the wounds. Sometimes the same story has to be told over and over in order for the victim to appropriate it properly—

**Telling stories, and repeating them over and over is part of our common humanity across all cultures and across all ages**

to put it in the context of an overall life and, while giving it its due, not letting the past dominate the future.

On June 15 in Winnipeg, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission opens. Central to its mission will be listening to the stories of people who attended the Indian Residential Schools.

Enough of these stories have been told that we know there is going to be much pain involved. All of us need to feel this pain if we hope to understand this important and tragic part of our country's history and how it has shaped the present.

Because it is not "their story." It is "our story." Ours whether we are native, tenth-generation British or

French or newcomers. Because it is part of Canada's story.

It is terribly important that we listen and not become defensive. So often one hears or reads comments that not all the teachers were bad or that not all the children were abused.

That is true. But it is to miss the point that the whole experiment was utterly flawed. It's like saying that not all Germans or Italians in the war were bad. Of course not! But the fascist experiment was atrocious and we don't cut off someone talking about the war's horrors by noting that Hitler built good highways.

So we need to listen and listen attentively, sensitively and humbly. We need to listen as if we were in a room with Jesus sitting there listening to the stories as well. Or imagine him in our living rooms watching the commission's work unfolding in the nightly news. Would we up and turn off the TV?

God is always with those who suffer. If we as a nation and we as a church want our story and the story of our native brothers and sisters to transform over time so that future generations tell a new story of when this great wound was healed, we need to be part of this story now.

As that old maxim puts it: God gave us one mouth and two ears. This is a time for the survivors to talk and for the rest of us to listen. ■

*David Harris*



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## Gripped

*Re Caught Dead by Jayne Self, Online only*

I read the chapter and it has got me gripped and wanting more!!! I need to know where I can get a copy of this book. It will be a terrific read!!

COBY VAN REENEN, SARNIA, ONT.

## Simple Instructions

*Re Centre Road, January*

As I read the Bible, there is nowhere that Jesus ever gives instruction in how the two practices that we accept as sacraments—baptism and the Lord's supper—are to be carried out. He simply says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you," and, "Do this in remembrance of me." Quite simple instructions it seems with no parameters or fences built around them.

SHANNON WYMINGA, CARIBOO, B.C.

## Seconds

*Re WWJ Read?, March*

Great letter! I hereby second his motions.

EMILY AND GARY, PE.I.

## Be Aware of Wording

*Re Confused Online, March*

As someone who has a family member who suffers from schizophrenia I find it in extremely bad taste to compare "surfing online" to this illness.

JUNE FINLAY, OLDS, ALTA.

## Pragmatic Occasions

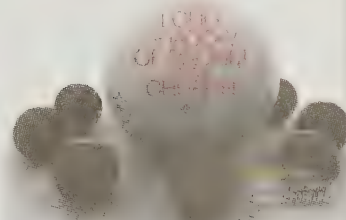
*Re Letter, Let's Have Agape (March)*

I have been involved in the selection and designation of several presiding elders in the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church, the design being that each of the small, scattered churches would have access to the sacraments in familiar relationships. The pragmatic occasion for this prac-

# Letters

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tice, which is shared with the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad, is complemented by the worthy theological intent of ensuring a monthly communion service in each and every church of the multiple parishes.

JAMES FARRIS, CHARLOTTETOWN

## However Misguided

*Re Populist Thuggery*

If politics is your real interest Mr. Harris, then please boot yourself out of this office.

PHIL MAYVILLE, BOBCAYGEON, ONT.

Congratulations to David Harris. On CBC Radio the point was made by several speakers that polls show ➤

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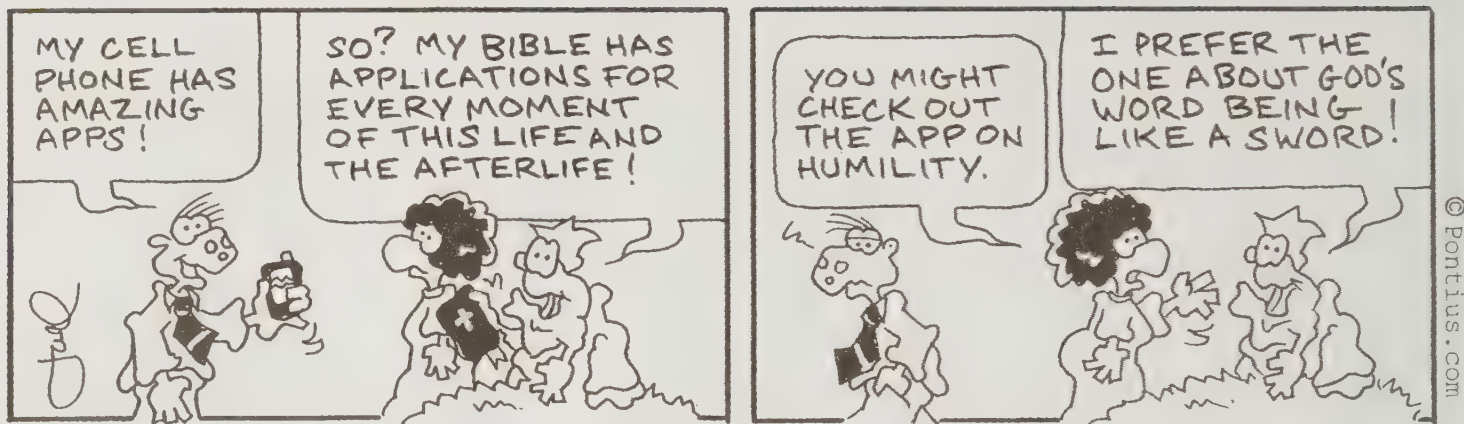
OCTOBER 2010 ISSUE — BY AUGUST 15

NOVEMBER 2010 ISSUE — BY SEPT. 15





## Pontius' Puddle



a substantial majority of Canadians favouring the Tough on Crime approach, despite lots of evidence that it is counter-productive. So the government can say that it is following popular opinion, however misguided that may be.

CHARLES NEILL, EDMONTON

### Favourite Hymns

*Re Jump With Joy, February*

Here are my choices of five hymns that our congregation is familiar with: *Lord the Light of Your Love Is Shining or Shine, Jesus, Shine* (376), and *On Eagles Wings* (57). We also like *As The Deer* (27). *Fairest Lord Jesus* (375) is a

favourite. We also enjoy *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* (570), and *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands* (339) (Gospel). It is very hard to narrow it down to five choices!

JANICE RACZKI, PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

### Living Faith in Canada Today

*Re Living with Living Faith, March*

We are constantly told that we must change, be more relevant, adapt to the times, get out of our comfort zone and so on ad nauseum, as if it were time to move past Christ.

In the midst of the confusion and panic both inside and outside the

church, along comes *Living Faith* with its, dare I say it, bold and uplifting restatement of our beliefs in modern and yet reverential language. Its humility in the presence of God's revelation is magnificent. Thanks be to God.

JIM PAULIN, OTTAWA

*Living Faith* is an excellent study guide. However, most groups in the church today are not interested in prayer meetings and Bible studies. They have made money making projects their god. Thank God, He has given us all the right to choose between good and evil and what is right and what is wrong.

EVELYN ROYCROFT, TORONTO

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Dr. DeWolfe acknowledges that *Living Faith* is "useful" and "acceptable." I would add the word "necessary." Dr. Garth Wilson, who shared the drafting of the document, and chaired the Doctrine Committee, noted "it is necessary to affirm our faith from time to time," and that the work was a matter of urgency.

The articles made no reference to *Foi Vivante*, the French version. Its appearance was recognition by the church of the bicultural character of Canada. The official Korean version carries this farther. We make a declaration before God and the whole world concerning our faith, and in Canada today this declaration must be made in many of the languages of our people.

IAN S. WISHART, ST. JOHN'S,  
NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR

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**Disappointed**

I am very disappointed in our *Presbyterian Record*. The articles are theologically too deep. It seems I need to read a paragraph two or three times to make any sense of it. By then, I have lost interest. I don't believe I am the only one with this opinion. A man in our congregation used articles for teens to spark conversation but is unable to do so now.

Theology is great but we need it in words we can understand. Thank you for listening to these complaints.

LENORA ARBUCKLE, ALMA, ONT.

**To God the Offerings**

It is to God we give our offerings and not to "Presbyterians Sharing" or any other sharing for that matter that will increase the financial resources, which God gives us to accomplish what He is asking us to do.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

**Hallelujah!**

*Re Wrapped In God's Love, March*

In 2008, I was the recipient of a prayer shawl. My sister-in-law was part of such a group of knitters in the Ottawa area. It was a powerful reminder that others were praying

for me. At that time, I was undergoing chemotherapy treatment for ovarian cancer. I am happy to say that I have been cancer-free for 18 months.

KAREN ROBBINS, LETHBRIDGE, ALTA.

**Church, State and Taiwan**

*Re Taiwan, January*

To recognize Taiwan as an independent country will obviously cause a lot of political consequences. But why should the church be so keen in political matters? Why did Siverns think whether Taiwan is an independent country or not so important to the PCC or PCT? What is the main purpose of the PCC to send missionaries to Taiwan or other countries? Why did he have to emphasize that "to resist the authority is sometimes imperative?" Are all these involve-ments a waste of the manpower and resources of the church?

YAN POON, STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

The role of the church in society is not so difficult. We are to speak the good news, good news for God's people, good news in the face of tyranny and injustice.

China is China and Taiwan is Taiwan;

if you don't believe me believe the great majority of Taiwan's 23 million people.

L. E. TED SIVERNS, TAIWAN

**Reading Material**

*Re Theology 101, February*

A statement attributed to Borg: "Jesus almost certainly was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did not see his purpose as dying for the sins of the world."

Is it any wonder Christianity is in turmoil?

TOM EYRE, VIA EMAIL

Here are three books by Abraham Joshua Heschel that, next to the Bible, have been the most formative and help in my life journey of faith: *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*; *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*; *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*.

ROBERT FINDALL, WOODSTOCK, ONT. ➤

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~ Khatija, Resident

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## FRONT Letters

### Enlightened Discussion

Re: *Laws and Motions*, April

Calvin Brown includes a prayer that "the black hood of prejudice will not cover the head of science and that the blindfold of ignorance will not keep out the light of discovery from the eyes of faith." This reminds me very much of Einstein's observation that "science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind."

BOB GEDDES, HAMILTON, ONT.

### A Cry to a Dying Denomination

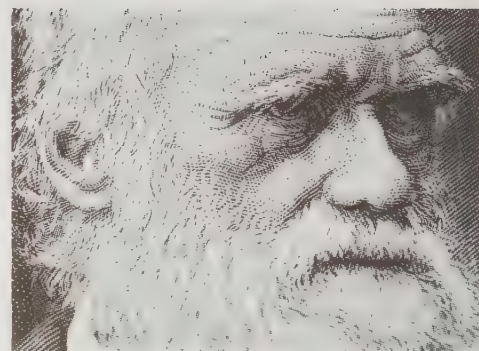
Re *Letters, Moving Towards Creative Change*, October

I remember very clearly Rev. Cheol Soon Park's sermon—its vision, its passion, its Reformed and reforming faithfulness. Sadly, many in leadership positions, both clergy and lay, lack the vision or the courage to embrace Rev. Park's inspiring words. Some colleagues have suggested to me that perhaps we need to embrace a palliative care approach to our churches and our denomination, avoiding change, allowing our church to live out its existence and die comfortably. Is this really what the gospel of Christ summons forth from us? Is this what God has in store for Presbyterians?

REV. DAVID CRAWFORD, CANMORE, ALTA.

### Corrections:

November '09: News, Letter From Nicaragua: It should read: "He ceded power in 1990 through democratic elections."



"Laws and Motions," April 2010 issue

He did not "seed" power.

April: pg. 24: It should read: "... as my prayerful Grandmother McNeil was wont to have said!" She was not "want" to say.

May: We reported that "Canada Ministries loans for new church developments or church extensions will increase ..." Canada Ministries does not give loans; but it does sit on the committee of the Lending Fund. Applications for loans are made to James Seidler, general manager of Presbyterian Church Building Corporation.

We are embarrassed by and regret these errors. ■

### online extra

#### READ THE FULL LETTERS ONLINE:

Once again we have chosen to share more voices in this section by severely editing each letter. The full versions of all of these letters are on the website—presbyterianrecord.ca. We encourage you to read these passionate, respectful and spirit-full conversations as they were originally expressed.

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# Double Plays

BOTH OF TONY FERNANDEZ'S CHILDHOOD WISHES HAVE COME TRUE. **BY ANDREW FAIZ**

**W**atching Tony Fernandez turn a double play is amongst the most beautiful things I have seen in my life. He would run, scooping down towards third base, pick up the ball, and then rising high in the air, twist his body and whip the ball to first. It was balletic and Fernandez's lanky body seemed delicate. He participated in six to seven hundred double plays with the Toronto Blue Jays in the late-80s, early-90s, and I must have seen quite a few of them while sitting in the cheap seats at Exhibition Stadium.

"I didn't really think about what I was doing," he told me one afternoon in a suburban hotel. "It just came naturally. I always thought short-stop was an artistic position." Fielding came naturally to him; and that gift awarded him four consecutive Golden Gloves.

"I always had very good hand-eye coordination but I had to work on my hitting," he said when I asked him about his impossible stand at the plate, the bat high above his head, twirling, twirling. Again there was a delicacy to his movements. "I learned that from watching Rod Carew. And, I didn't realize how much we had in common till I met him many years later."

Fernandez was born in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, amongst the youngest of 11 children. His father was a line or shift supervisor at various plantations by day; in his spare time he was a co-pastor. Growing up, Fernandez wanted to be either a pastor or a baseball player. By his teens he was scouted by the Blue Jays and joined them fulltime in 1985. "In my town in the 1970s, every kid played baseball. We dreamed of playing base-



"I NEED PRAYER  
NOW MORE  
THAN EVER.  
—I DON'T HAVE  
TO WORRY ABOUT  
THE DAILY BREAD  
ANYMORE, BUT  
I HAVE TO THINK  
ABOUT NOT  
LOSING MY WAY"

ball. To get out of our poverty."

And then there was that other theme in his life, his faith, expressed by his parents. They worked hard—

he watched his older brothers and father lift impossible loads of sugarcane on their backs—and they prayed and sang. They prayed for their daily bread. We spoke at some length about the connection between a hardscrabble life and a prayer for redemption.

After two decades in baseball, Fernandez is rich and famous. "I need prayer now more than ever. I pray differently—I don't have to worry about the daily bread anymore, but I have to

think about not losing my way." Fernandez is studying to become a minister. "I am very lucky, God has granted me both of my wishes."

He was in Toronto speaking at MissionFest, an annual Christian trade show, to promote the Tony Fernandez Foundation, which amongst its other activities provides Christian care and mentoring (along with a baseball clinic!) to the myriad underprivileged youth in the D.R. The foundation ([tffoundation.com](http://tffoundation.com)) is a manifestation of his childhood prayer, to get out but then to come back and to share the gifts he had received. It has taken him around the world (he had only recently returned from Africa and the experience had shaken him in many ways) to be both an ambassador and a pastor.

Needless to say, meeting Fernandez was a thrill and doubly so to meet him in the context of our shared faith. He spoke eloquently about maintaining his faith through his ball career, with its many temptations off the field, and the machismo in the locker room, especially amongst his fellow Latin players. Our conversation kept returning to his childhood and youth, to the strong evangelical faith he absorbed. He signs himself a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ on his website and his story is a testament to the glories and challenges of that servitude.

Entering his 50s soon, he describes himself as a more seasoned Christian, giving testimony to the fact that this faith of ours is a constantly growing, maturing concern. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



Tony Fernandez



## Ottawa Changes Relief Policy

HAITI GIVINGS TO PWS&D NOT MATCHED IN EXPECTED MANNER. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

CANADIANS GAVE \$220 million for Haiti relief efforts to charities of their choice expecting the government would match donations in the usual fashion, which is to give the promised dollar-for-dollar to the named charities. Instead, a separate fund—the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund—was created and administered by CIDA, to be doled out how and where the government saw fit.

“The government has changed its method over the years,” said Ken Kim, associate secretary at PWS&D. “Following the tsunami, the matching funds were allocated in full to those who raised the funds upon the presentation of a viable and effective proposal. Since then, they have changed the method of how organizations can access the funds.”

Namely, individual organizations have to apply through a complex process to CIDA in order to receive funds for their relief projects. PWS&D is doing this through a collaboration of nine Canadian churches, called Canadian Churches in Action—the same coalition used to access funds and

coordinate relief efforts following the tsunami, as well as the South Asia earthquake, and disasters in China and Burma.

“Our initial request for \$1.89 million of the [matched] funds was not successful,” said Kim. “However, given our positive track record as Canadian churches working together, we are hopeful that we can access these funds. Together with the other members of Canadian Churches in Action, we’ve collectively raised over \$15 million that was matched by the Canadian government in its Haiti fund.”

Face-to-face meetings with CIDA were scheduled for May to discuss this further.

Canadian Presbyterians gave over \$1.5 million to PWS&D for Haiti relief, \$1.2 million of which is eligible for matching.



Donations for Haiti are channeled through CIDA to ensure contributions are closely aligned with the government of Haiti's vision and plans.

In April, Minister of International Cooperation Bev Oda announced the first disbursements of the matched funds.

Half of the Fund went to the government's contribution to Haiti's reconstruction plan, and the other half (\$110 million) will be available for NGO applications.

So far, the Canadian Red Cross is the major recipient of matched funds. ■

## General Assembly Coverage Online

THE RECORD AND THE CHURCH'S communications office will be collaborating this year to bring Presbyterians the best coverage possible of the 136th General Assembly in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

As always, the *Record's* July/August issue will feature a full report on the assembly, but the *Record* website ([presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca)) as well as the PCC's site ([presbyterian.ca/assembly2010](http://presbyterian.ca/assembly2010)) will give readers an up-to-the-minute glimpse into what's happening in Sydney.

*Record* and Communications staff will be taking photos throughout the event, which will be uploaded to a flickr account linked through both websites. There may also be an opportunity for commissioners to post their photos to

the same flickr account. The *Record* will also provide daily reports on the business of the day; the church, in contrast will provide its regular “Daily Digest” which summarizes other happenings at assembly such as special speakers, guests, and the E.H. Johnson luncheon.

Colin Carmichael, head of the communications department, will be offering live “tweets” of what's going on in Sydney. Special moments will be videotaped and uploaded to YouTube. The *Record* site will feature commissioner bloggers who will offer personal insight into assembly business.

Both sites will feature links to the other, offering a simple way to find assembly coverage no matter which portal readers prefer. ■—AM



# Record Named Best in Class

THE *PRESBYTERIAN RECORD* was named the best denominational magazine on the continent at this year's Associated Church Press awards banquet, held in Washington, D.C.

Denominational magazines are the core of Associated Church Press membership, the oldest religion press association in North America with more than 100 member publications.

The *Presbyterian Record* is "An up-to-date, professionally rendered publication that engages in meaningful and important issues that are often overlooked—including a major feature on the mental health of clergy," wrote the judge.

The *Record* won five other awards,

including two firsts: artwork by Michelle Thompson that captured the February 2009 cover story on clergy mental health issues, and a story by freelance writer Michael Walker on a physically challenged person finding community through the eucharist.

Art director Caroline Bishop picked up a second place award for her cover design of the Canada Youth '09 September issue. Bishop, who commissioned the winning art illustration by Thompson, was also involved in the *Record's* other second place award for photography, one of a collection of photographs by Paul Jeffrey in Malawi.



The *Record* won six awards from the Associated Church Press including two for the images above.

Writer David Webber received a third place award in the devotional/inspirational category for his January 2009 piece, *Requiem To Jim*.

"I've always believed *Presbyterian Record* readers are the best served; this award confirms that conviction," said editor, David Harris. ■—AM



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# Churches in Scotland Denounce Human Egg 'Auctions'

A SENIOR MEMBER of the Church of Scotland, backed by a Roman Catholic counterpart, has raised concerns around the practice of "auctioning" and selling human eggs for in vitro fertilization treatment.

"The sale of human eggs favours the commoditization of human parts—human eggs should not be in a shopping basket on the same level as a grocery item," said Rev. Ian Galloway, convener of the church's Church and Society Council.

The sale of human eggs is not allowed in Britain, where donors are only compensated "reasonable" expenses and loss of earnings up to a maximum of 250 British pounds (CDN\$387).

"The Church of Scotland has a

clear policy against the sale of human eggs because it considers the practice exploitative of the poor, who may feel compelled to become donors for a fee," said Galloway.

The concerns follow recent news reports about an initiative of American and British fertility clinics focusing on the marketing of human eggs to British fertility patients.

At a seminar in London in March, participants had their names put into a draw to win a treatment cycle worth an estimated CDN\$20,130.

Peter Kearney, spokesperson for the Catholic Church in Scotland, said most people would be 'repulsed' by the idea of using a human egg as a reward for attending a seminar. ■—ENI

## Scotland's High Suicide Rate Faces Scrutiny at Assembly

THE GROWING PROBLEM of suicide among young people was to be discussed at the Church of Scotland's general assembly in May.

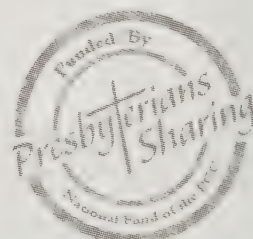
Statistics show Scotland as the part of Britain with the highest incidence of people taking their own lives—information that led to the issue being on the assembly agenda.

Churches are being asked to give their support to the Scottish government's Choose Life program, which is a 10-year plan aimed at reducing suicides in Scotland by 20 percent by 2013. Television advertisements tell the public they can reach out and help those contemplating suicide by listening, learning, understanding and talking. ➤

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# Community News Briefs

"We all have a role to play," said Rev. Ian Galloway, convener of the Church and Society Council.

"Through our local churches and networks and through Action by Churches Together in Scotland, we are seeking to understand these issues more fully and to offer pastoral support to those who struggle with dark times. It is clear that this is an extremely complex issue, especially in relation to other matters such as homelessness and poverty," said Rev. Lily Twist, chairperson of the Scotland Methodist District. ■—ENI

## Canadian Professor Receives Grant to Study Religion References

AN ACADEMIC has received a grant of \$2.5 million to lead a study of religious diversity in Canada.

Lori Beaman, professor of religious studies at the University of Ottawa, will head a team of 36 researchers from Australia, Britain, Canada, France and the United States.

One element of the study is an upcoming workshop in India that will examine religion there.

"Then, we can start to build a comparative basis to think about how is religious diversity and religious freedom thought about more globally," said Beaman.

She said her team would examine the notion of "tolerance" of religions and religious practices.

"Tolerance is an interesting concept, where people often see it as a good thing, and it has been a concept, especially in liberal democracies and in interfaith dialogue, that has been used in a positive way," said Beaman.

"But, when we say we tolerate someone, what is it we are really saying? How does that feel, and how does that make the person being tolerated feel?" ■—ENI

## Record Website Easier to Navigate

THE *RECORD*'S WEBSITE is now fully updated, fully archived, and stories are easier to access going back to January 2005. To find the stories, simply use the drop-down menu on the left column on the main page. The month and year is now visible on every page, making it easier to know exactly where (or "when") you are on the site.

The process—which included transferring about 3,000 articles to the database and redesigning more than 50 table of contents pages—took about a year to complete, so *Record* staff are hoping the tweaked set-up will make the site more user-friendly.

Managing editor Andrew Faiz said this step is the latest in an on-going process to improve the website. "It was always the *Record*'s intent that the website be interactive, feature new content, and boast a fully searchable archive. The last has just been completed."

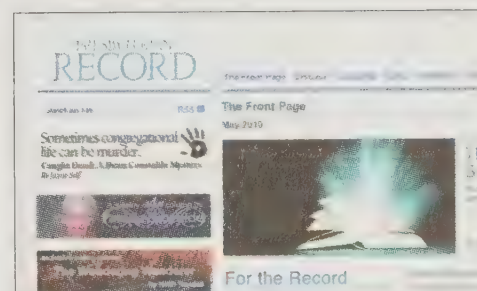
"We hope people find it interesting and helpful to be able to review past issues of the *Record*," said David Harris, editor.

Check [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) for our as-it-happens General Assembly coverage this month. —AM

## Sanctuary Under Fire

RESPECT for the practice of sanctuary offered by churches to individuals denied refugee status appears to be on shaky ground. Thanks to a policy added to the enforcement manual of the Canada Border Services Agency, the tradition of sanctuary may be violated in certain situations.

After two years of discussion, the formal policy was added in March, and, according to a story in the *National Post*, "the agency believes church sanctuary cases can 'pose a threat to the integrity



The *Record*'s website is now fully archived to 2005.

of the immigration system."

The article notes that CBSA officials have so far opted not to enter places of worship, but that the new policy "outlines in broad terms some of the 'exceptional circumstances' when entering a church might be necessary, including 'cases where there are strong public calls for enforcement action' or where there's a risk to public safety or national security, such as cases involving terrorists or murderers."

But officials may still decide to enter a church even in cases that are not thought to be security threats: "the policy states that sanctuary cases will be closely monitored and if there is evidence of widespread abuse, forced entry may be required in less-urgent cases 'to maintain the integrity of the system.'"

The *Post*'s story states that agency staff are growing more wary of letting churches decide which cases are security threats, and which ones are not, noting that public opinion on the issue of sanctuary is divided.

Stephen Allen, associate secretary of the Presbyterian Church's Justice Ministries, puts things into perspective, noting that, "Nothing has ever stopped federal officials in Canada from entering a church to apprehend a failed claimant who sought and was given sanctuary. There is nothing in Canadian law that legitimizes sanctuary. It is a historical practice that continues ►



to carry some moral legitimacy."

Allen notes the recognition that Canadians are divided on the practice of offering sanctuary, and whether or not government officials should be allowed to violate the practice. "This suggests some understanding of the issue and some affirmation for sanctuary as a moral principle by a segment of the Canadian public."

Since 2000, there have been 30 cases of churches offering sanctuary. There are currently three active sanctuary cases in Canada, two in British Columbia and one in Ontario.

While Presbyterian congregations often sponsor refugees coming to Canada, the Presbyterian Church hasn't had any cases of sanctuary, but the General Assembly did pass a statement on the issue back in 2006. It notes that, "Sanctuary is an act of civil disobedience and carries penalties."

However, after considering *Living Faith*, the *Book of Forms*, and the *Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation*, General Assembly agreed that, "As a public act of faith, sanctuary must be the last resort when all

THE DUTY TO PROTECT  
MAY TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER  
THE LAW IF THE INDIVIDUAL  
IS AT RISK OF PERSECUTION

other options have been exhausted and there is probable evidence that an individual will face persecution if deported to his/her country. The decision to offer sanctuary will be a difficult decision. The duty to protect may take precedence over the law if the individual is at risk of persecution."

It also notes that while responsibility falls to a congregation's session

for deciding on how a building is used (including for sanctuary), the decision must be voted on by the congregation, and presbytery can then veto that decision.

"Most cases get resolved through humanitarian and compassionate applications and are not dangers to the public," said Glynis Williams, director of Action Réfugiés Montréal, a Presbyterian Church-supported agency. "What is of concern is that the new proposed legislation will close off this form of resolution to the issue of churches offering sanctuary."

"On the issue of doubting churches doing appropriate assessments, this seems somewhat unfair. Both the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada [who have offered sanctuary in the past] have excellent guidebooks, with extensive procedures and oversight." ➤

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"I can't imagine a faith community offering sanctuary to a hardened criminal," said Allen. "Offering sanctuary is not intended to put into question the integrity of the immigration system, but to protect human beings who the faith community believes would be at risk if deported." —AM with files from the National Post

### New Chaplain Installed

CAPTAIN DANIEL H. FORGET was formally installed as the newest chaplain at CFB Petawawa on March 7 at a chapel on the military base. Padre Forget had been the minister at nearby First, Pembroke, Ont., and members of that congregation—including clerk of session Ann Thompson who escorted him down the aisle—were in attendance to support their former minister. During the ceremony, Forget displayed his musical talents during a duet with his wife, Bonnie Jennings.

That Forget is stationed to his own community for his first military post is an unlikely occurrence, and his former congregation is happy to have him remain close to home.

Born and educated in Montréal, Forget was ordained in 1981. He has ministered to congregations in Montréal, Trois-Rivières, Melbourne, Ottawa and Pembroke, and served the Presbyterian Church in different capacities including national coordinator of Francophone Ministries, moderator of the Synod of Québec and Eastern Ontario and as moderator of the Pres-

bytery of Québec. Forget served as a chaplain in the Primary and Secondary Reserves from 1989 to 1992.

He was sworn into the military in 2009. Since January, he has been attached to 1 Canadian Field Hospital and Central Medical Equipment Depot, helping support the mission in Haiti. His sense of call to serve the Canadian Forces comes from a deep desire and willingness to serve God, his country, those in uniform and their families. —Hilda Young. Hilda is a freelance writer from Petawawa, Ont.

### All Roads Lead to Winnipeg

THE PRESBYTERY OF WINNIPEG is hosting a free exposure tour during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's inaugural event, which will take place in Winnipeg, June 16 to 19.

"We hope by attending the Truth and Reconciliation Commission people will continue the process of reconciliation with aboriginal people and the church," said Rev. Peter Bush, tour organizer and minister at Westwood, Winnipeg. "We hope people will gain a personal understanding of the residential school question, but it's more than residential schools that are on the table here. It's connections between native and non-native, between native and newcomer—to gain an understanding of the nature of that and what a healed and whole relationship looks like in this country."

The tour will begin June 18 at St. James' Presbyterian and will move toward the heart of the city where

displays of photography, art, dance, music and film will be set up as part of the TRC event. Lori Ransom, the church's healing and reconciliation animator, plans to take part.

"The TRC will be holding six other national events across Canada over the five years of its mandate, but the Winnipeg event will be the most significant for Presbyterians since both schools we operated most recently were within the region to be covered by this first event," Bush wrote in a press release.

Winnipeg will also be home to a gathering of about 80 high-profile religious leaders from around the world, June 21-23, to listen and report to one another, and to collaborate on sending a unified message to government leaders of the G8/G20 nations.

The message will press governments to remain true to the eight Millennium Development Goals ratified by the 192 member states of the United Nations 10 years ago. The goals aim to halve global poverty by 2015. The G8 nations—including Canada—pledged assistance in achieving the goals, but are well behind in meeting the promised deadline.

This will be the first time Canada has played host to the World Religions Summit 2010: Interfaith Leaders in the G8 Nations. A 2005 forerunner event in the U.K. united Christian faith traditions around the G8 summit and set the stage for subsequent interfaith gatherings.

Visit [faithchallengeG8.com](http://faithchallengeG8.com) for more information and also Facebook and Twitter. ■ —C.Purvis and the CCC

**Margaret Evans is working with the Shauri Yako Community Youth Support Centre in Nyeri, Kenya as a Youth Program Coordinator.**

**[www.presbyterian.ca/margaretevans](http://www.presbyterian.ca/margaretevans)**

Margaret's work is funded  
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Letter from India

# Healthy Villages

FOCUSING ON HEALTH EMPOWERS WOMEN. BY GUY SMAGGHE



AIR LETTER

THIS MORNING we were picked up in a small bus hired for the day. Anitha's organization doesn't own a vehicle, or any property for that matter. They believe in investing in people, not in physical goods. When they need a vehicle, they rent it. The small bus is required today as we will stop to pick up six doctors at the Sree Balaji Medical Centre in Anakaputhur, on the way to Irumedu, some 40 km from Chennai, to attend a one day clinic in the local school. When we reached the health centre, the head of the team of doctors invited us to visit their training centre located in Kundrathur, on the edge of the city.

The doctors, four men and two women, are pleased to donate their time to reach out to people in rural areas where health services are not available. It opens their eyes to the health problems that are specific to those areas, such as skin conditions that occur as a result of extended work in rice fields, respiratory infections, anaemia, etc. Volunteering in the villages helps the doctors expand their knowledge while providing an essential service to the community.

As we make our way out of the congested city into the countryside, the tarmac turns into a dirt road, and

Needless to say, the benefits of sharing basic knowledge on nutrition, pre- and post-natal care, family planning, vaccination, and so on, creates improved conditions for the women both now and in the future. The health of their children is likely to be stronger, which helps them succeed in their studies and to eventually get a job or be creatively entrepreneurial. Women's life expectancy is likely to rise as a result as well.

These are key reasons why PWS&D's partners focus a large part of their energies on health related activities. Through their experience, they have seen that health and nutrition of community members has a direct impact on the potential for that community to develop, and on the ability of women to feel empowered.

Helping communities to stay healthy will provide a strong human resources basin to build upon. The doctors go to different villages every Wednesday, and will come back to this village in two months' time. In the meantime, the team leader told me he would send a group to do a baseline analysis in order to help them understand what the starting point is for this village in terms of its health indicators. After a couple of months, they will conduct the same survey in order to gauge the impact of the clinics on the communities' health. On our way out, we talked with a grandmother, her daughter, and granddaughter. They were happy to have been seen and told us how they had been taken care of. A small step on the path to community health for Irumedu. ■



VOLUNTEERING IN THE VILLAGES HELPS DOCTORS EXPAND THEIR KNOWLEDGE WHILE PROVIDING A SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

the noise and fumes of the traffic vanish. When we reach Irumedu, there is already a line up of 30 people patiently waiting to be seen by the volunteer doctors.

Immediately, the doctors unload their gear and set up six stations in one classroom. The vast majority of those waiting to be seen are women and children. The school kids also line up and are checked to see if they are suffering from malnutrition symptoms, or if they have any other problems. The consultations are free, as well as basic medicines that are provided (mainly vitamins, tonics, mild pain relief, etc). The doctors use

the consultations as an opportunity to teach the patients about the things they can do to stay healthy.



Top: Guy Smagghe with students waiting to be seen by a doctor; bottom: Lining up for clinic registration.

*Guy Smagghe is the senior program coordinator for PWS&D. He can be reached at [gsmagghe@presbyterian.ca](mailto:gsmagghe@presbyterian.ca).*



## Hindu Governor Praises Christians at India Presbyterian Gathering

The Hindu governor of India's Meghalaya state has at a mass gathering of Presbyterians hailed the role of Christian missionaries in spreading a message of "love, trust and peace in the turbulent tribal societies" of the country's north-east.

Governor Ranjit S. Mooshahary's sermon excited many delegates at the 39th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India. Speaking to an estimated 25,000 worshippers, Mooshahary quoted from chapter nine of the Book of Isaiah, which looks forward to the birth of the Prince of Peace. The governor noted that "the true purpose of Jesus coming to this world" was to bring peace.

Mooshahary hailed Christian missionaries who "laid down their lives to foster human values in remote areas" of north-east India. "What is most beautiful about religious faith is its ability to give solace to humanity in the strife-torn world," he said.

The sermon was followed by a homily given by the general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Rev. Setri Nyomi who exhorted those present to "break the chains of injustice" as agents of peace.

"Yes, this is the heart of the Gospel—to be messengers of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our peace," Nyomi told the crowd. He was focusing on the "Christ our Peace" theme of the assembly and noted that the message of peace "also questions us to examine our lifestyles and ways in which we perpetuate lack of peace for others."

The Presbyterian assembly was attended by nearly 1,000 delegates belonging to various ethnic and language communities from north-east India. —ENI ■

# Cities of God



the  
Christian  
calling  
to  
urban  
life

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# Called to Mission

PRESBYTERIAN DUO HELPS HEAL BODIES AND SPIRITS IN PAKISTAN. **BY CONNIE PURVIS**

"I FELT CALLED TO MISSION in my late teens," said Sheila McKelvie, who trained as a nurse. "Bill spent a couple months as a medical student in the United Arab Emirates and met Pakistani patients there. After we were married we spent four months in Pakistan and felt that God was leading us to serve there."

She and Bill, a medical doctor, have spent two decades working in Pakistan as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. They moved back to Sheila's native Newfoundland a year ago to help their two youngest children settle into Canadian universities, but plan to return in the near future.

In rural areas of the Sindh province in southern Pakistan, Bill said, health education often involves pictures and diagrams, since many of those who are infected or vulnerable to disease are illiterate. But those who have learned are able to teach others, spreading the word about common diseases like tuberculosis.

According to the World Health Organization, Pakistan ranks eighth on a list of 22 countries most burdened with tuberculosis or TB. The infectious disease usually attacks the lungs and, if left untreated, kills about 50 per cent of the time. The required regimens of antibiotics are long—usually running from six months to a year—and can be costly.

Rural residents often pay four or five months' wages for treatment at hospitals, which require fees for services, Bill said. Although clinics he visited provide treatment free of charge—with the government footing the bill for the necessary drugs—he says they found that people were less likely to complete their regimen if they had to travel far to reach a clinic.

Although TB's symptoms tend to

alleviate quickly once treatment begins, failing to complete the drug regimen could have disastrous consequences. Patients could relapse or even develop a strain of the disease immune to anti-

HEALTH EDUCATION OFTEN INVOLVES PICTURES AND DIAGRAMS, SINCE MANY OF THOSE WHO ARE INFECTED OR VULNERABLE TO DISEASE ARE ILLITERATE

biotics. But Bill described a new transfer system that allows people to complete treatment at government clinics closer to their homes.

"More people are coming earlier," he said.

Sheila works to create healthy relationships between diverse people and over the past year has continued to run workshops and training sessions. During the two-week trip, she led

workshops in the cities of Lahore and Karachi aimed at relating with others—including non-Christians—in Christian ways, and encouraging a view that transcends cultural differences.

The duo also described shifting gender dynamics in the rural communities. A school, which once housed almost exclusively male classes, now employs female teachers and has a more balanced student population. Groups of both men and women have formed citizen community boards composed of at least 25 people with identity cards. And the McKelvies attended a graduation ceremony for nine women trained as traditional birth attendants.

"What attracted us to Pakistan was the people," Sheila told the *Record*. "They are very warm and hospitable people and there are great needs also ... We feel that God has clearly shown us that there is still lots for us to do there. We have many friends in Pakistan and want to continue to contribute." ■

Connie Purvis is the *Record's* staff writer.

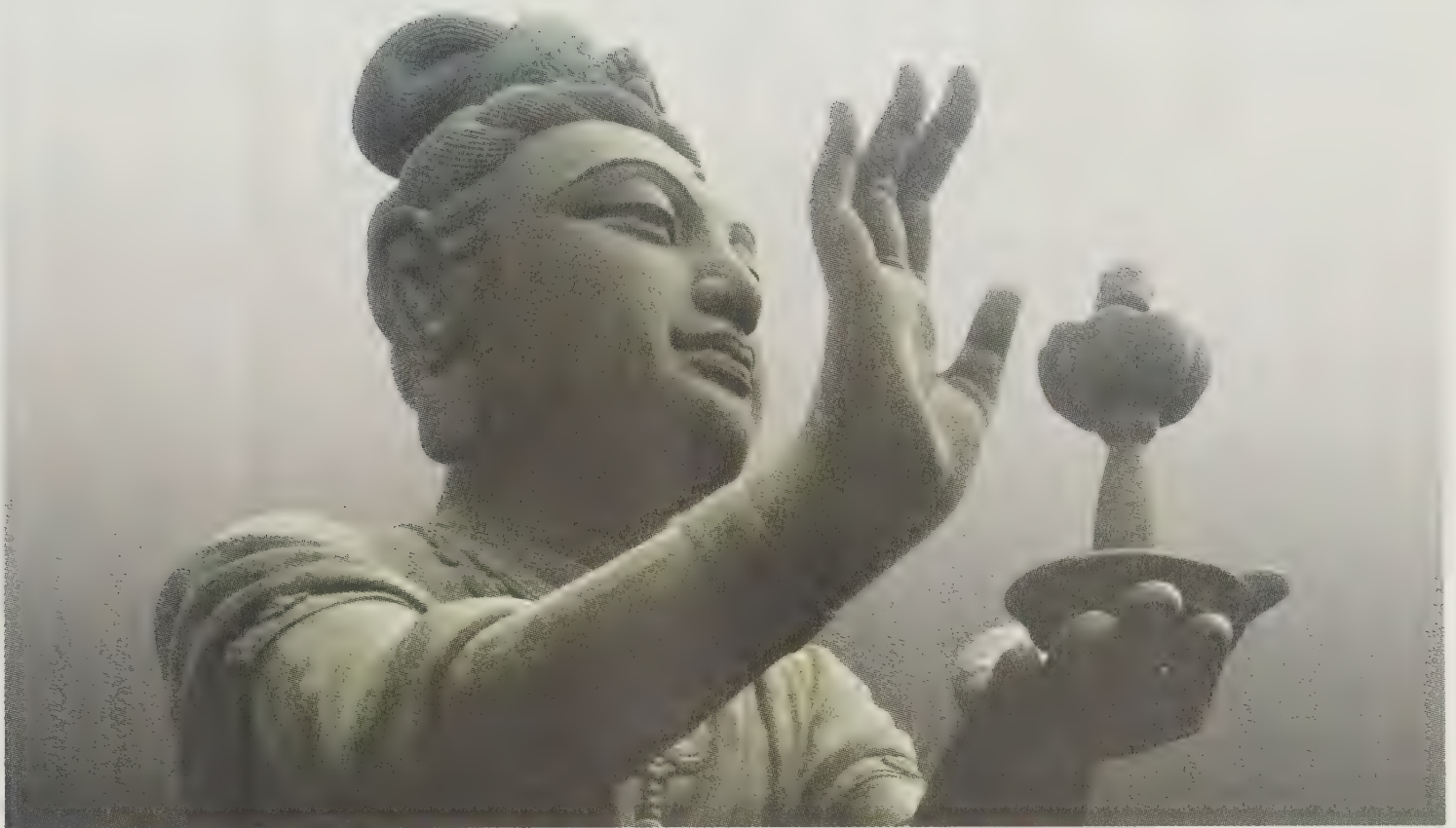


Bill McKelvie with a graduating class of traditional birth attendants. These village women are leaders in their communities, equipped to deliver babies safely and hygienically.



# Features

Theology 101:  
Where in the World is God?



## God in Other Religions

LIVELY IDEAS ABOUT THE DIVINE. BY PATRICIA DUTCHER-WALLS

**IN MAJOR CITIES** and small towns of Canada, the presence of a wide variety of peoples, religions and cultures presents opportunities and challenges. One advantage of the diversity of religions is the chance to learn about their beliefs and practices. Toward this purpose, we need to listen and learn respectfully, lest we inadvertently bear false witness against our neighbours by distorting who they are. For this article, I asked three colleagues to put in their own words answers to these questions: "Who or what is God or the divine in your religion? In what ways is divine presence in daily life understood in your religion?"

**Judaism's** foundational story tells of the covenant between Yahweh, recognized as the only God, and the descendants of Abraham in the land of ancient Israel, beginning around 1200 B.C.E. After the Roman Empire destroyed the temple in 70 C.E., Jews have lived in diaspora communities, practicing their faith in synagogues, family rituals and the study of Torah under learned rabbis. Today, some 15 million Jews live primarily in North America, Europe and modern Israel.

Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum is Director of the Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre at Vancouver School of Theology. He is Associate Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Jewish Thought and coordi-

nates the Centre's programs in social action, research and contemplative practice. He writes:

"While belief in God is shared by many Jews, precisely what this belief entails is radically divergent. Some members of Jewish communities adhere to a range of theistic approaches while others are not at all theistic. This ➤

online extra

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## World religions express diverse and lively ideas about the divine, all of which are a part of the richness of the human tapestry of faith

diversity and inconsistency can be traced both to the enormous variety of cultures in which Jews have lived and also to a divergent heritage of biblical images, prayers, philosophical treatises, mystical texts, legal discussions and so on. There exist vast differences between notions of God as transcendent and immanent, compassionate and commanding, healing and protecting, source of life and true judge, feminine presence and sovereign of the universe.

"Nevertheless, there is probably no more widely shared notion among Jews who do believe in God than a sense that God is one. On a daily basis many Jews invoke God's presence, affirm God's justice, and praise God's goodness. These are elements in a spiritual practice inextricably bound up with concrete acts: breathing, washing one's hands, taking in nourishment, visiting the mourner, honouring the elder, teaching the young, healing the unwell, welcoming the stranger, redeeming the captive, feeding the hungry, advocating for justice, redeeming the Land, and sustaining the eco-system."

**Buddhism** traces its founding to 2,500 years ago in the enlightenment and subsequent teachings of an Indian ascetic, Siddhartha Gotama, who became the Buddha ("enlightened one"). Empha-

sizing monastic and popular religious practices as well as philosophical and political teachings, Buddhism has been a varied and lively movement that spread throughout Asia in the centuries after its founding. Today it numbers some 375 million adherents in Asia and the West.

Kakushi Kate McCandless has been practicing Zen Buddhism in the Japanese Soto tradition since 1983. She and her husband received priest ordination in 2003 and they are resident priests of Mountain Rain Zen Community in Vancouver. In response to my questions, Kate wrote:

"It is a common assumption in the West that Buddhism is atheistic. I prefer the word non-theistic to describe Zen Buddhism, which does not have a supreme being as an object of worship, but rather emphasizes direct experience of the boundless and interconnected nature of Being. The historical Buddha was very pragmatic, concerned with teaching how to alleviate human suffering rather than metaphysics.

"However, Buddhism is culturally and doctrinally extremely diverse. Some sects revere a buddha of the cosmic principle, while others worship a salvational figure. Buddhism has also absorbed pre-Buddhist deities from Asian traditions. While a more intellectual understanding views these not as deities but as archetypal energies within us, in popular or folk traditions they are beloved, feared and worshipped. Western Buddhists vary in the degree they adopt the cultural and religious elements of Buddhist traditions.

"For me, experience of the divine or ultimate reality in daily life is best described in poetry. The Japanese haiku is the quintessential form that expresses the union of subject and object, human and universe, in one crystal-clear moment. In the words of Zen Master Hakuin, 'This very land is the pure lotus land, this very body the Buddha.'"

**Islam** originated in the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the early seventh century C.E. in the Arabian Peninsula. The Muslim community,

centered in and living out the Prophet's teachings in the Quran, spread in a wide variety of forms and practices, from learned legal scholarship to mysticism, throughout the Middle East and Asia and now represents about 1.2 billion followers. The faith emphasizes practices like confession, prayer, fasting, alms and pilgrimage.

Itrath Syed is a Muslim PhD student at the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University and an instructor in the women's studies department at Langara College. Last summer, she taught Contemporary Debates in Muslim Women's Feminisms at VST. She responded:

"The core belief of Islam is 'There is no God, but God. And Muhammad is the messenger of God.' This belief is non-negotiable and is what makes Islam a decidedly monotheistic faith. The Arabic word for God is Allah, which is simply the Arabic word for the Divine. The belief in the Oneness of God also means a belief in the Oneness of creation. Every single thing in the universe has been created by the One God.

"Muslims believe that Allah has chosen to reveal the divine nature to us through many signs that the Quran points us towards. Within the Quran are also the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah. These names, or attributes, help us to learn what we ultimately can never fully know.

"Allah tells us in the Quran that he is closer to us than our 'jugular vein' and that we should take Allah as our 'protecting friend' and that Allah alone 'is sufficient for us.' Within the Islamic tradition, the believer and the Creator must have a direct and unmediated relationship. There is no human that can constitute or sever the connection between the human heart and the Merciful, one of the 99 names of Allah."

Other world religions express similarly diverse and lively ideas about the divine, all of which are a part of the richness of the human tapestry of faith. ■

*Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls is dean of students at Vancouver School of Theology.*





# If All Are One, How Far Does It Go?

PAUL'S WORDS ARE STILL DANGEROUS! **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

*June 20, 2010—  
4th Sunday After Pentecost-C  
Galatians 3:23*

**“T**here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Dangerous words. Not so much because of what they say, as where they will take us if we take them seriously.

These were dangerous words for Paul. So dangerous he wasn't always able to hold onto them. A generation or two after Paul, living these words was dangerous for the church in the Roman Empire. Jew, Greek, slave, free, man, woman all in one place every Sunday!

Paul argues here against people who play on human fear of dangerous words and ideas.

They have tradition and scripture solidly on their side. They counter Paul's passion with sweet reason. “Outsiders are welcome. They just need to become like those who are already on the inside before they enter.” Agree to live by a very clear set of rules. And for the men . . . Well, the pain soon passes.

Paul insists Jesus has done away with any distinction between birthright believers and new converts. “There is no longer Jew or Greek . . .” More than that, “There is no longer slave nor free . . .” More than that, “There is no longer male and female . . .” More than that?

Everybody knows the difference between Jew and Greek. Jews have clear instruction from their God to separate themselves from all others. Greeks despise the religion of the Hebrews. All law and prohibition, with no proper distinction between spirit and flesh. ➤

“Outsiders are welcome. They just need to become like those who are already on the inside before they enter”



## Most Christians in the world still prop up walls between men and women in their churches. We have a long way to go. A lot of work to do

It's the way the world is supposed to be! Sometimes Paul accepts the way of the world. Now he has courage to say no. A new order is dawning!

Everybody knows the difference between a slave and a free person. Paul's own people may not own slaves anymore, but they live in an economy that runs on slaves and slavery. Slaves are members of the Greek household. When households are baptized slaves go into the water, too. What slave would dare resist circumcision if it means he can be a Christian, like his owner?

It's the way the world is supposed to be. Paul doesn't always want to upset good order. Now he has courage to say no. A new order is dawning!

Everybody knows men and women are different. On this Jew and Greek

agree. Paul's people have purity rules, and centuries of tradition that tell women their place in the world. The world is built on the family, after all. Women are important. Let them tend to the family. Let the men look after the world.

It's the way things are supposed to be. A lot of the time Paul agrees. Now he has courage to say no. A new order is dawning!

Dangerous words. So dangerous Christians often find them too hot to handle. The balance of membership in the worldwide church has shifted from birthright believers in the north to new converts in the south just as it did from Jews to Gentiles in Paul's day. In at least one communion, walls are going up to enforce separation over who's worthy and who's not.

Slavery continued within Christendom for 18 centuries after Paul declared its end. Churches in North America are as divided racially and economically today as they were when slavery flourished.

Most Christians in the world still prop up walls between men and women in their churches. We have a long way to go. A lot of work to do. That is, if we dare take Paul's dangerous words seriously.

Do we hear Paul call us into more danger? To stand on the principle "all are one in Christ Jesus." To go against the way of the world, an order we assumed is God's order. To flout millennia of tradition. To contradict scripture, made bold by scripture itself. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.*

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# Pilgrims, Roosters, Sore Feet and Healing Spirit

A CONVERSATION WITH PAUL MYERS. BY STEPHEN FARRIS

**I** WAS ENVIOUS a few years ago when I heard that Paul Myers was walking El Camino, the ancient pilgrim way to Santiago de Compostella in northwest Spain. He travelled from Le Puy en Vallay, the town where the various pilgrimage routes through France met, to begin the journey into Spain and the long, hot slog to the shrine of St. James. Myers was, at that time, the minister of a Vancouver-area Presbyterian church and the whole venture seemed an enticing mixture of holiday and spiritual exercise, at least from my armchair. Recently, Myers wrote *Rooster in the Cathedral*, a description of his experiences on El Camino and I had the opportunity to speak with him about the book and about the spiritual journey it chronicles.

"Which section of the bookstore does it belong in," I asked, "with the travel books, the religion section or elsewhere?" Myers replied that the publisher had labeled it a memoir, a book that tells a piece of the author's life, a verdict he understands but does not entirely share. It certainly isn't a travel book, though you will feel the heat of the Spanish sun, the grit on your face and, with imagination, the blisters on your feet. Don't take it with you on the journey; it isn't a guidebook and though not a heavy book in any sense of the word, it does weigh something. Myers admits that on the road he became obsessed by weight, even pho-

tocopying his guidebook and throwing pages away once he had passed a landmark. "Pilgrim, everything weighs something," he reminds us, a truth of the spirit as well as of the backpack. But even that simple observation tells us what this book really is. It is actually "a tool to go about the business of reflecting on a spiritual journey."

John Calvin, whose 500th anniversary our churches celebrated last year, lambasted "gadding about" on pilgrimage, but perhaps that harsh judgment belongs to his contentious time. By the way, one of the pilgrimage routes passed the front door of the house in which he grew up in Noyon, France. Perhaps his negative judgment was formed early. The Reformers objected to the idea that a pilgrimage to the shrine of a saint could be good work to earn God's favour and earn remission of time in a purgatory to which the Bible bears no witness. Completion of the pilgrimage warranted 40 days relief, 200 days if the pilgrim's procession was led by a mitred bishop, and if "it took place on the feast day of St. James, the exemption soared to 600 days." Though commercial activity remains, it is now chiefly a matter of curios and mementos. That too is a reality that stretches back to the Middle Ages. In any case, today's pilgrims on El Camino are by no means all practicing Catholics or even Christians. They walk for their own reasons, seeking God knows what. For some it is an opportunity for an inexpensive holiday; the

"refugios," Spartan pilgrim lodgings, cost very little. For most, the journey is more, however. In post-Christian Europe, El Camino is an exercise that bears testimony to a perennial thirst for the spiritual, which just might be an opening for evangelization in a society that has, for the most part, forgotten the church. Meeting, and in some cases meeting again, fellow pilgrims is a feature of El Camino and, through Myers' mediation, the book also. In a book of ponder-worthy quotations, one of the most beautiful comes here, from the ancient poet Ovid, "Love will enter cloaked in friendship's name."

I asked Myers what part of the journey had been the most difficult for him, expecting him to reply that it was climbing the Pyrenees, the mountain range of near Rocky Mountain grandeur on the border of Spain and France. Not so. In fact, while climbing the mountain passes, he became lost and experienced at the hands of a shepherd driving an ancient vehicle, a "rattletrap miracle." This Myers interprets as Providence and turns the experience into a testimony to the present activity of God in our lives and in the world. No, the hardest part of the journey was the Meseta, a high, nearly treeless, dry and, above all, hot plateau in northwest Spain. Here the reader too experiences the heat and blisters. Even here, however, there are moments of grace, such as cherries for unexpected sale in a grimy industrial suburb of one of the towns through which El ➤



## “Much of the traditional Church is dying because it does not deliver what people need”

Camino passes. Here, however, the author also reflects on the possibility of failure and loss. There is a difference between “false optimism and meaningful hope.” Sometimes loss and pain are so great that not even a “fleck of hope” remains. At that point, “Let there be others to hope for us.” Indeed, at times, fellow pilgrims provide just that hopeful encouragement.

One would like to claim that the church is the fellowship of those who hope for us when we cannot hope for ourselves. It is at this point, however, that Myers introduces the title metaphor of the book. In the Cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, the pilgrim is startled by the crowing of a rooster. High in the cathedral there hangs a cage with a live rooster and hen. This commemorates a highly unlikely 12th-century tale of a young pilgrim hanged, but miraculously preserved alive for many weeks, to the astonished delight of his parents. (To find out how poultry come into this, literally, fabulous story, you will have to read the book.) The point is not that medieval Catholics believed improbable tales. It is that at that time “the rooster meant something spiritual to

them. Somehow the rooster helped them to think well of God.” That was then and this is now, but the rooster still crows in the cathedral. That could provoke a self-indulgent sense of Protestant superiority over the remains of medieval Catholicism, were it not for one unsettling question: “How many churches and their denominations, each in their own peculiar way, have some kind of anachronistic rooster crowing in their sanctuary?”

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, though not named, does not escape at this point. Myers does name our near fanatical attention to getting the exact wording of proposed changes to our rules of process just right, while congregations die around us. While care in legal process may not be, in my opinion, the worst of our Presbyterian characteristics, I would be hard pressed to deny the central charge. “Much of the traditional Church is dying because it does not deliver what people need. It is dying because it insists that we venerate a rooster of the past instead of searching

for God in the present.” Still, as Myers insists, “anything can happen. Will there be a new Protestant Reformation, a next Evangelical Great Awakening?” At this point, Myers and I

stopped talking about the book and started talking about the church. Now Myers is, in my opinion, one of the very best Presbyterian preachers around, but he is not at present in active ministry. That’s sad—we don’t have enough really good preachers in a church that gathers around the proclaimed word—and it has partly to do with those roosters. We Presbyterians had better name and do something about those roosters but I have no intention of sharing our private conversation here. If the book works for you as reader, however, this is exactly what will happen to you. You will enter a conversation with Myers about the state of your soul and the state of the church.

That leaves the reader of this review in too negative a place, however. This is a book about a pilgrimage and, in the end, at least some pilgrims arrive in Santiago and even beyond in Finisterre, the cape at the “land’s end” of the Roman world. And with arriving, there is joy. The rooster may be central in the book but it is not the final word. The last word is arrival, by the grace of one who is himself “Teacher, agitator, Camino.”

The book is ideal for bedtime reading; short chapter follows short chapter, experience and reflection in one-day legs of a literary and spiritual journey. It is daily spiritual stimulation, sometimes as niggling as a developing blister, sometimes as refreshing as a cool draft of water under the Spanish sun.

If you do plan on walking El Camino, use Google to find one of the many websites that describe the journey in detail. The best guidebook to the pilgrimage is in French not English. In the meantime, Myers extends to you the pilgrim’s greetings: “Buen Camino,” a good journey, and “Ultreia,” Onwards! ■

Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris is Dean of St. Andrew’s Hall, VST, Vancouver.



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# PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2010 Edition, Issue 2



## Annual Report

**W**E LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE MANY PEOPLE FACE THE DAILY RAVAGES OF scarcity, malnutrition and injustice. God inspires us to reach out in acts of compassion and one of the many ways our church chooses to do this is through Presbyterian World Service & Development. PWS&D works with partners around the world on long-term development programs that give hope for the future and provide emergency relief in times of immediate crisis.

### Generosity Conquers Economic Decline

The year 2009 was scarred by a global economic downturn and PWS&D was not immune to the changing financial climate. An urgent appeal for funds was issued in September 2009 to ensure we could continue to support the life-saving work of our partners around the world.

The response was overwhelming! Presbyterians across the country demonstrated unprecedented support for PWS&D and raised \$1,509,404. Thank you for your generous gifts and prayers.

We are pleased to present our financial information for the year 2009, as enclosed in this newsletter.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF PWS&D PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD

*"We are so thankful for the help. All the women can improve their lives. Our minds are awakening."*

— ROSA BENITA, PRESIDENT OF A WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUP IN RURAL GUATEMALA

## \* HAITI:

On Jan. 12, 2010, a powerful earthquake hit Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, causing widespread death and destruction. Working through the Action by Churches Together Alliance, PWS&D mobilized to help bring immediate relief. We are grateful for the tremendous response from Presbyterians across Canada who donated close to \$1.5 million for Haiti relief. Long-term efforts are now focusing on rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods and helping people overcome the trauma.

## \* GUATEMALA:

In partnership with the Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas, women in rural villages are learning new skills to start small businesses, grow more nutritious food and care for livestock—improving the quality of life for their families and communities.

## \* GHANA:

The PWS&D-supported Garu Centre is working to help differently-abled youth access formal education, literacy and vocational training in a supportive and nurturing environment.

## \* MALAWI:

PWS&D is working to overcome hunger and food shortages, improve agriculture practices, care for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, provide clean water, educate children and reduce rates of malaria.

## Financial Highlights

\* for the year ended December 31, 2009

REVENUES	2009 \$	2008 \$	EXPENDITURES	2009 \$	2008 \$
Undesignated contributions	1,422,523	1,346,471	Disaster, Relief and Rehabilitation	564,932	771,178
Designated bequests	262	50,235	Tsunami Relief	0	27,500
Designated contributions – projects	734,213	768,870	Tsunami Relief – CIDA/PUMA	0	265,263
Designated contributions – emergency relief	512,911	512,814	CIDA/PWS&D Overseas Program	587,182	619,086
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	343,500	572,500	Presbyterian constituency funded projects	1,337,891	1,392,028
CIDA – Youth Internship	0	8,979	Memberships, partnerships and coalitions	220,640	254,574
CIDA – Tsunami (PUMA)	0	300,000	Resource, communications, promotion, grants	125,741	111,236
Government of the Province of Saskatchewan	13,386	16,148	Program support	313,494	255,989
Other income (interest)	34,098	85,710	Administration	274,664	204,788
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,060,892</b>	<b>3,661,728</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,424,545</b>	<b>3,901,642</b>

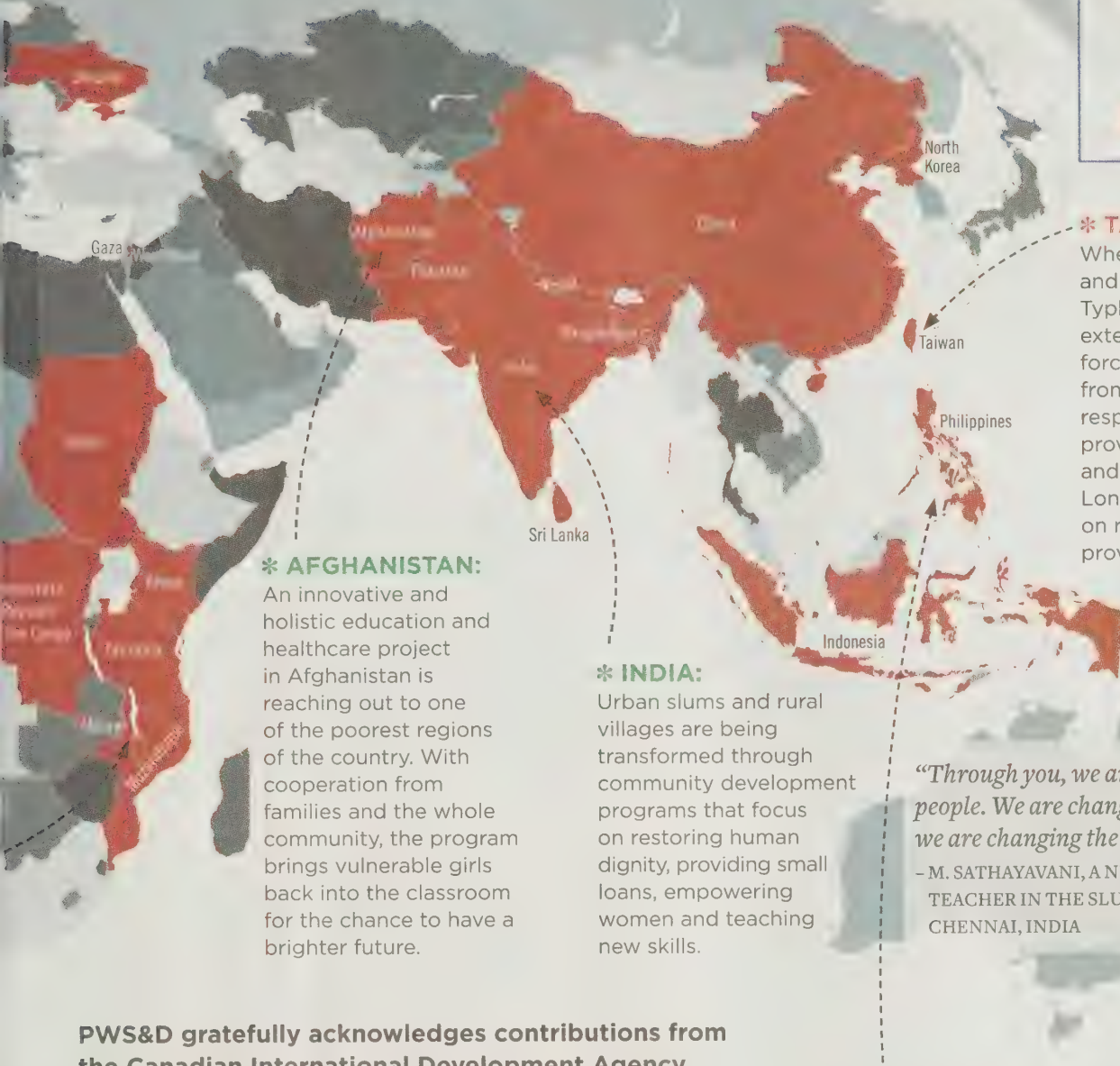
\* This report is an abridged version of PWS&D's report in The Acts and Proceedings of the 135th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. For more information, visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)



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**\* AFGHANISTAN:**

An innovative and holistic education and healthcare project in Afghanistan is reaching out to one of the poorest regions of the country. With cooperation from families and the whole community, the program brings vulnerable girls back into the classroom for the chance to have a brighter future.

**\* INDIA:**

Urban slums and rural villages are being transformed through community development programs that focus on restoring human dignity, providing small loans, empowering women and teaching new skills.

**\* TAIWAN:**

When massive flooding and mudslides following Typhoon Morakot caused extensive damage and forced thousands of people from their homes, PWS&D responded quickly to provide food, clean water and emergency supplies. Long-term efforts focus on rebuilding homes and providing counselling.

*"Through you, we are helping many people. We are changing the children; we are changing the slums."*

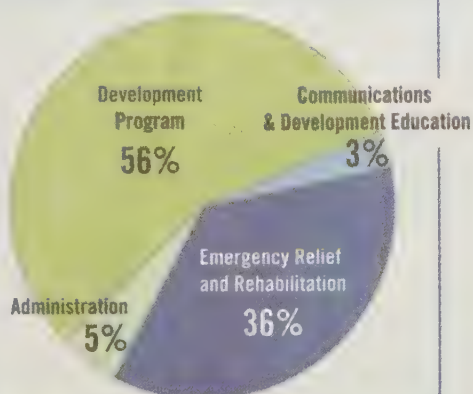
— M. SATHAYAVANI, A NIGHT CLASS TEACHER IN THE SLUMS AROUND CHENNAI, INDIA

**\* PHILIPPINES:**

Over four million people were affected by devastating storms that struck in September. In partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D helped provide rice, dried fish, legumes, cooking oil, sugar, salt and milk powder for people in desperate need.

PWS&D gratefully acknowledges contributions from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to help make your donations go a long way.

**HOW A DOLLAR IS SPENT**



**Did you know?** A woman dies in childbirth somewhere in the world every minute, and 80% of these deaths could be easily prevented if basic healthcare services were available. PWS&D is working with partners in India, Malawi and Nicaragua to train community health volunteers and bring healthcare services to women and children—fostering new hope for healthy futures.





# Presbyterians in **ACTION!**

## BIG HEARTS FOR HAITI RELIEF

Congregations across the country stepped up to make a difference following the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in January. With dedication and creativity, funds were raised to support PWS&D's emergency response and below are just a few examples of the many activities that took place.

**1.** A group of young people from Calvin PC in Miramichi East, NB, rocked away for eight hours on rocking chairs and served a spaghetti supper to raise \$1,100.

**2.** When four youth members of Drummond Hill PC in Niagara Falls, ON, heard of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti, they organized a "Help Haiti Dance" event. Through word-of-mouth and Facebook, over 100 tickets sold in just one week, raising \$1,100. Local MPP Kim Craitor was moved by their generosity and compassion. He invited the young men and their minister to his office to congratulate them for their efforts.

**3.** The congregation of Renfrew PC in Renfrew, ON, came together to raise \$3,067 for Haiti and presented the cheque to PWS&D communications coordinator, Barb Summers.

**4.** The congregation of Union PC in Georgetown, ON, raises money for local and international charities by selling sweet corn every year. Local farmers donate the corn, volunteers pick the corn early in the morning and deliver it to a self-serve booth where money is collected. The church also held a breakfast fundraiser to support Haiti earthquake victims and raised \$2,500!

The congregation of Knox PC in Gravenhurst, ON, wore small hearts on their lapels for three weeks and decorated the sanctuary with heart stickers to raise \$1,400.

The residents at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver, BC, hosted a bake sale and garage sale, sold hot dogs and coffee, and provided musical entertainment to raise \$588.50.

The congregation of Knox New Westminster, BC, was busy fundraising for a PWS&D clean water project but wanted to make a difference for victims of Haiti's earthquake so they raised an additional \$2,360 for Haiti relief.

## FANCY FOOTWORK

As part of the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington's fundraising campaign for Girls' Education in Afghanistan, the congregation of Knox-Calvin PC in Harriston, ON, held a walk-a-thon and collected \$1,700.

## CHILDREN MAKING CHANGE

The Sunday School of Weston PC in Weston, ON, wanted to share their blessings with other children around the world so the Sunday School raised over \$280 to help provide animals for families in Malawi through PWS&D.

## ADVENT GIFTS

The congregation of St. Andrew's PC in Pictou, NS, raised an impressive \$1,025 for livestock programs around the world during their Advent fundraiser.

## TUNES FOR TANZANIA

The congregation of St. Andrew's PC in Scarborough, ON, hosted a Toronto Police choir concert that raised \$1,090 to support children in Nicaragua and farmers in Tanzania.

## CARING FOR CREATION

The Grade 7/8 Sunday School class at South Kinloss PC in Lucknow, ON, wanted to raise money to Care for Creation. They made a collection of five cards with pictures of God's creation and sold them to collect funds. They raised \$134 and shared what they learned by doing the children's story on Earth Day Sunday.



## Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

For more information or to make a donation, contact:

Presbyterian World Service & Development  
50 Wynford Drive,  
Toronto, Ont. M3C 1J7

1-800-610-7301 ext. 291  
pwsd@presbyterian.ca

[www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

**Canada**

This organization has been approved by PWS&D with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Editor: Barb Summers  
Communications Coordinator

Enclosed is my donation to PWS&D for: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make cheques payable to PWS&D or make an online donation at [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

*PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development and relief work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



# 2010 Graduates

## Knox College, Toronto

### MASTER OF DIVINITY



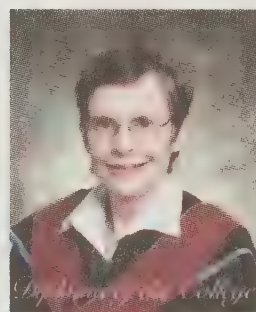
Joseph Bae  
Korean, Edmonton



Jeremy Bellsmith  
St. Andrew's, Whitby, Ont.



William Han  
Vaughan Community, Ont.



Joan Masterton  
Unionville, Ont.



David Moody  
Chippawa, Niagara Falls



John Read  
Knox Sixteen, Oakville, Ont.



Melinda Saunders  
Maranatha Christian  
Reformed, Cambridge, Ont.



Charmain Sebestyen  
South Gate, Hamilton, Ont.



Ji Young Jane Yoon  
St. Timothy, Toronto

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY CERTIFICATE



Albertha Henry-Carmichael  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

### MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Elizabeth Brewer  
Runnymede, Toronto

### MASTER OF DIVINITY & MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Eugene McKinnon  
Durham, Ont.



**Knox College**  
**continued**

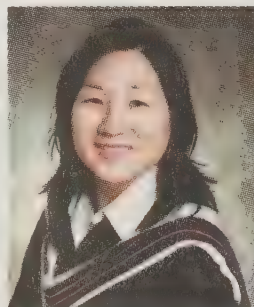
## MASTER OF THEOLOGY



Moon Jung Choi  
Young Nak, Toronto



Xi Ping Jin  
St. Paul's Church, China;  
Northlea United, Toronto



Chong Sun Erin Ko  
Toronto Myung-Sung



Jeong Guk Lee  
Alpha Korean United Church

## DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

# **The Presbyterian College, Montreal**

## MASTER OF DIVINITY



Edward Carruthers  
Lakeside Heights Baptist,  
Montreal



James Duckett  
Grace, Montreal



Joshua Lee  
Maplewood, Chateauguy,  
Que.

## SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Philip Kim  
St. Paul's, Ottawa



Peter MacDonald  
Union, Thorburn, N.S.



Jared Miller  
St. James, Truro, N.S.



Andrew Thompson  
Bridlewood, Toronto

## DIPLOMA IN MINISTRY



Bradley Childs  
Dayspring, Edmonton

# **Vancouver School of Theology**

## SPECIAL PROGRAM IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



Heung Ryeol Han  
Antioch, Edmonton



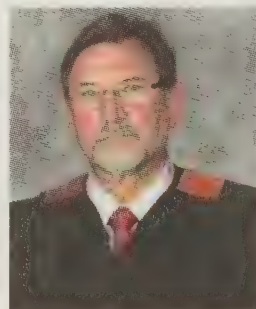
Samuel Lee,  
Vancouver Korean

## MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



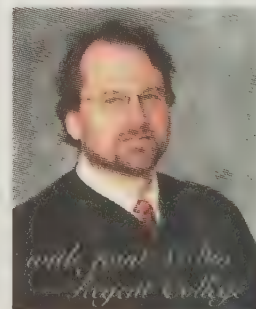
Janette McIntosh  
West Point Grey, Vanc.

## MASTER OF DIVINITY



Woldemar Sosnowsky,  
West Vancouver

## DIPLOMA IN PRESBYTERIAN DENOMINATIONAL STUDIES



Richard Watson,  
Grace, Calgary



# Star Nurseries

CREATION AND RECREATION.

BY JOAN MASTERTON

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!*

—2 Corinthians 5:17

**THE GREAT THING** about being a Christian is that we are given second chances. We are given second, third ... even 77 chances! I think I have needed a good many of those opportunities to choose how I live my life. My most recent major repenting (changing of one's mind; regretting something in the past and seeking a new future) caused me, a life-long practicing Presbyterian, to think again, and offer to serve God and God's people as a minister, a servant of the church, a teaching elder. I left a career as a public servant with Environment Canada to work with Rev. Dr. Herb Gale as he established the new planned giving program for the denomination.

I was hungry to be more directly involved both in helping Herb to help congregations in breathing life and hope into actions and words that said "abundance" and "sufficiency" and "gratitude," and in deepening my own spiritual awareness, understanding and being. Granted, it took some shock treatment (a spiritual crisis in my life) for God to catch my

attention; my name is Joan but I responded like Jonah and ran. However, God is persistent, and so I found myself just inside the front doors of Knox College in September 2005, and I was overcome with the most profound sense of being in the right place at the right time.

I have never lost that feeling. Now I know what it feels like to be "born again," words that had never before escaped my lips. I feel brand new; I'm beginning a new life, eager to share my passion and walk with others as we live life together in community, deepening our relationships with God, with each other, and with the rest of humanity.

My husband, Scott and I share a hobby—amateur astronomy. We love gazing into God's universe and marvelling at its beauty, its integrity and its affirmation that we are part of something so much bigger than us. The Hubble space telescope shows us distant galaxies and supernovas where old stars die and explode, seeding space with galaxies of new stars and planets and probably life too. "In the

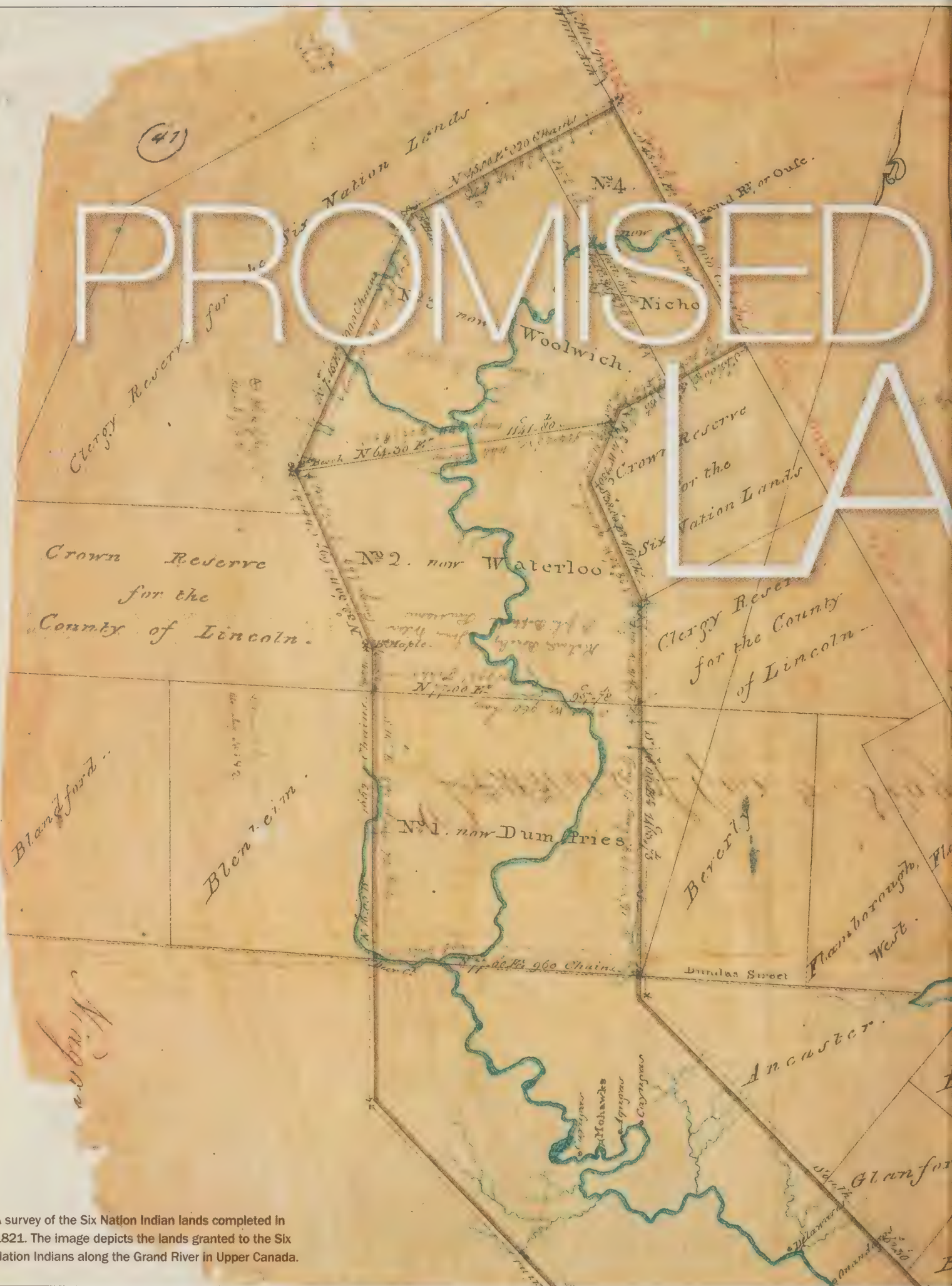
beginning, God created ..." and God never stopped creating. Astronomers call places where old stars die and new stars are born "star nurseries." Birth and re-birth, creation and recreation, are ongoing throughout the universe—and within our own lives too. We are connected, integrated—with God, with each other, with our planet, and with the stars. The calcium and iron in our bodies came from exploding stars. This is God's universe, fresh, ever brand new, filled with possibilities and bright hope. I am so grateful for this opportunity to learn, to serve, to grow, to draw closer to God and to God's people. Thanks be to God! ■

*The future Rev. Joan Masterton is a member at Unionville Presbyterian Church, Ont.*



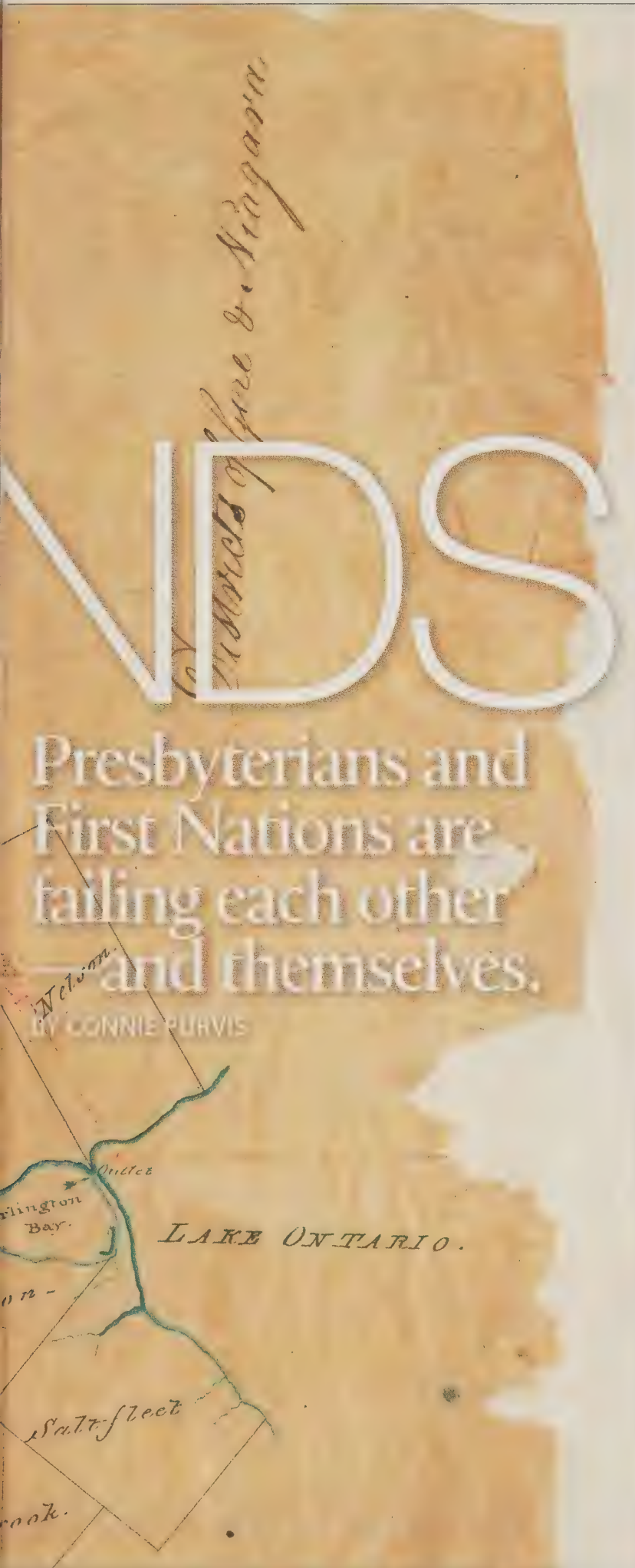


# PROMISED LAND



A survey of the Six Nation Indian lands completed in 1821. The image depicts the lands granted to the Six Nation Indians along the Grand River in Upper Canada.





Joseph Brant by George Romney, 1776

From just beyond the doors of Central Presbyterian Church, a statue of Joseph Brant (the Mohawk chief who leant his name to Brantford, Ont.), ringed by six First Nations chiefs, stands at the centre of the downtown's Victoria Square.

Although this public square is mere paces from the doors of three churches and the Brant County courthouse, its peace has been punctuated by occasional protests, but not by preaching.

**REV. MARK GASKIN**, now minister at Knox's St. Andrew's Galt in Cambridge, Ont., admits that in the 14 years he ministered at Central, he never preached a sermon about the protests that have been happening, in some cases, right outside the door. He hasn't been afraid to tackle other political topics from the pulpit; he admits he's talked about the situation in Afghanistan because "we can all agree on that." But when it comes to aboriginal land rights, he thinks the topic is still rarely broached at coffee hour, although it may crop up in the parking lot or over the morning paper.

"Why don't we talk about it?" he asks. "If you're too passionate about it you end up sounding like a racist, I think. And I know you'll hear from someone else that it's not about race, but I just don't ►

SURVEY, PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA; BRANT PORTRAIT, NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA



**“My house is on the land they’re claiming. The church is on the land they’re claiming. I think there’s the sense that, if you show too much sympathy, people will ask, ‘well, are you willing to give your house back?’”**

feel comfortable, as a white guy, talking about it. We’re all just hoping it’ll go away, which I know is different from the official position of our church.”

“If I’m really honest,” Gaskin says, “I’ve gotta say that, as far as church is concerned, this all might as well be happening on the other side of the world. We just want it to go away, and it’s hard to say we have much sympathy.

“My house is on the land they’re claiming. The church is on the land they’re claiming. I think there’s the sense that, if you show too much sympathy, people will ask, ‘well, are you willing to give your house back?’”

There are five Presbyterian churches in Brantford. They are all modest, with devoted congregations and a handful of community ministries including food banks and Bible studies. As at Central, aboriginal concerns make for uncomfortable conversations, and none of the churches are involved with ministries aimed to improve relationships between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

“I’ve only been here four years and am just learning the history of the area and the aboriginal folks’ position,” says Rev. Rod Lewis of Alexandria. “I find it a very difficult position for everybody.

“Opinions are sort of divided, or at least mixed. Some may comment about having a sensitivity, but then may qualify that by saying, ‘but that’s preventing the city from moving forward,’ or something like that.”

**JOSEPH (THAYENDANEGBA) BRANT** fought alongside the British against the Americans during the War of Independence; he met the king of England and the president of the United States. For his loyalty and for his losses, the British granted him and his Mohawk nation 10 kilometres of land on both sides of the Grand River. The area where his allies crossed the river from what is now New

York State was known as Brant’s Ford. The Crown also established an Anglican church on the land, in honour of the religion to which Brant had converted.

Just south of Brantford, as city streets give way to fields of aboriginal peoples’ land, the steeple of Her Majesty’s Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, the oldest Protestant church in Ontario, rises above the trees. The white chapel, shading the tombs of Brant and his son, is all that remains of the Mohawk village that once stood nearby. Today, the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve sits on about 46,500 acres, or about a third of the original grant.

What happened to Brant’s land? A succession of native leaders (beginning with Brant himself) chipped away at its edges, selling off parcels to non-aboriginal people. Developers and squatters knocked off other sections, sometimes with blessings from governments and courts. Three centuries later, Brant’s legacy is complicated—each acre of land, given or taken, is hotly debated, protested, questioned in court. But one thing is certain, in their own minds, native and non-native peoples are convinced they are protecting their own promised lands.

---

**PHIL RACE** considers himself a bit of a speculator. The former adherent of a Presbyterian church in Brantford bought a nine-acre plot of land near the Grand River in 2005, planning to build a service station just south of Highway 403. Plans changed, and in 2007 he sold three acres to become the site of a new Hampton Inn.

“Here’s the only letter I received when we were going through the rezoning process [for the service station],” he says, pulling out a paper emblazoned with letterhead from the Six Nations Council, an elected governing body created under the Indian Act. “Basically, it says they recognize the land was sold

and patent in 1842. They’re recognizing the transfer but litigating on behalf of the money. This is the same land where they then proceeded to tie the hotel up for months. So I have, in writing from the Six Nations, a document recognizing the legal transfer of the property. But native protestors came and stopped construction.”

A striped couch, containers of toilet paper, the ripped remains of garbage bags and long poles that used to support a tipi were left on the hotel site for a long time after aboriginal protestors were ordered off of the property by an injunction from the city. The protestors allied themselves with the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, a then newly created branch of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council, a traditional governing body chosen by clan mothers. In the constant toing-and-froing of opinions, the province of Ontario rejected the HDI’s authority to negotiate in the fall of 2007.

While the protests were relatively mild, locals remembered the 2006 highway barricade at nearby Caledonia over a proposed subdivision. Various levels of government bickered over who had authority and responsibility for the land claims, an elderly couple was harassed, non-natives showed up in later months to protest the native people. A decade earlier, similar cycles of acrimony and mistrust did lead to violence when Ontario Provincial Police shot Ojibwa Dudley George, during a protest at Ipperwash Provincial Park. That death led to a public inquiry.

Lawsuits, injunctions and compromises are by now a typical tangle of the development process. Race still owns almost six acres of property that he plans to develop if he can find the right opportunity. For the moment, he has no choice but to wait.

“Anytime you sit down with the natives, and especially the Six Nations, there’s the hereditary council, the ➤





The Haldimand Treaty granted Joseph Brant and his Mohawk Nation 10 kilometres of land on either side of the Grand River.



A representative of STM Construction tried to stop native protesters from taking down a locked gate in Brantford, July 2007.



## **“We don’t see this as a protest. We go and cause inconvenience. It’s not a land claim, it’s reclamation. And retribution”**

elected council ... and then you have the splinter groups, the HDI,” Race says, expressing his frustration and confusion. “Who can make a decision that will bind the Six Nations? ... It’s a very difficult situation for the federal negotiators. Are the people who can bind the Six Nations sitting across the table?”

**NOT SURPRISINGLY**, then, confusion and frustration are not limited to one side of the debate. Keith Jamieson is a Mohawk historian and adjunct professor of Indigenous Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University’s Brantford campus. He argues from the native perspective: he considers the Crown an ally—not a superior—to the Six Nations, and calls the Haudenosaunee Confederacy a “moral compass” which has been given authority to set priorities for

the community. “The HDI is a bit of a knee-jerk reaction,” he admits, calling it a “first shot” at creating an administrative arm for the traditional body.

“We don’t see this as a protest. We go and cause inconvenience. It’s not a land claim, it’s reclamation. And retribution.”

Amy Lickers, community planner for the Six Nations Council, maintains a spirit of optimism. She suggests many aboriginal people aren’t opposed to development as long as the community is consulted first. “At the very beginning stages, when you’re gathering information, it’s okay for you to send in your worker people, but in the long run we don’t want to see your worker people here because they can’t do anything. We want to see your decision-makers and your money people and whoever else needs to be here at the table because that’s who we need

to be consulting with.

“A lot of times we find out about development as an afterthought. [You can’t consult when] your shovels are in the ground; you need to get here before that. ... Once you’ve already started to develop, where’s the room for the consultation? There is no room.

“Sometimes there’s been a feeling of hopelessness, and so far the protests have been the only things that have been able to get any action. Because it’s not like our concerns for land claims are new. This has been going on for a long time, but it’s not until recently that people have started to take notice of it.”

As a community planner, Lickers deals with development on reserve lands, but also works with municipalities and developers whose projects may impact the Six Nations, or which are



Whoever said,  
**“You can’t have your cake and eat it too,”**  
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**What flavour of ministry would you like to support?**

### **A real life example:**

In 1994, Giollo Kelly acquired a \$10,000 gift annuity which she designated for the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation. When she died fifteen years later, Giollo had received nearly \$11,000 (87% tax-free) in total payments and left a legacy of nearly \$7,500 with the money remaining in her annuity account.

(The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Annuity rates and the residue available for disbursement vary.)



**Planned Giving Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada**  
**1-800-619-7301, [plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca](mailto:plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca)**



taking place in disputed areas. According to the Supreme Court, the Crown is required to consult and accommodate aboriginal peoples when projects could affect their interests.

**"PEOPLE IN PLACES** like Brantford have experienced what native peoples have," says Lori Ransom, the Presbyterian Church in Canada's healing and reconciliation animator. "They've had their land occupied. They've felt unsafe in their communities. Both sides have—as protests and counter-protests have occurred nearby. So there's healing needed on two levels for both sides: historic and recent."

Ransom is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, and worked in the department of Indian and Northern Affairs for more than 20 years before taking on her current role.

"The whole idea of making amends for historical wrongs is fairly recent. We don't have a lot of precedents to look back on, or examples that we can point to and say 'this is how it's done.' We're all groping through this. But I think it's a sign of health and maturity that we've reached a place where we can say, 'There's been an injustice and I've benefited from it. How can I make amends?'"

On the level of courts and governments, there are negotiations which may one day attach monetary settlements to historical injustices. And, she suggests, although money or land may be a tangible part of an apology—of saying I was wrong and I'm willing to give something up as part of my act of apology—it won't heal the hurts or the spirits of individuals and communities.

"People may need to ask: What's at issue? What's at stake?" she suggests. "Church members may have been wronged in their own lives, or in the lives of their parents or grandparents. What's wounded is the relationship, and to restore a relationship both parties need to work together to rebuild trust. We have to ask, how we can love our neighbours when they seem like our enemies—whom Christ also told us to love?"

Rev. Stewart Folster, a member of the Eagle Clan, describes his experience as a member of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nations' reserve in Manitoba. Under a May 1997 agreement aimed at fulfilling the Crown's treaty obligations, his nation received 4,344 acres of federal Crown land, a federal payment of \$350,000 and \$3.68 million to purchase additional land from willing sellers. But he grew up on the reserve as a "non-status Indian," feeling that he didn't belong. His grandfather sold his treaty rights in the early 1900s, and they were only restored to the family when Bill C-31 passed in 1985.

"As of yet, my family has never benefited from any of that money," he says. Folster is an ordained Presbyterian minister and pastor of the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry—an outreach to Saskatoon's inner-city population, offering meals, worship services, fellowship, healing ceremonies, spiritual counselling and prayer.

"Truth and reconciliation means that you want to restore the relationship between sisters and brothers," he says. "You want to learn about each other. It's time. It's time to live together. I also work with non-native people in my ministry and they come to worship and they take part in our ceremonies."

"Tears have to be shed. Anger and resentment and fear have to be addressed. God will be there. My elders have some beautiful teachings to give you, not just you, but to the entire world. Reach out to the Six Nations. They are created in God's image and we are all related. Some of them will be angry at your interest in them but show them that you want to get to know them. The reason we have conflict is because we don't sit down and get to know one another."

Ultimately, reconciliation may not be about agreeing, or about fixing hundreds of years of historical problems. Perhaps it is the small, yet sincere steps that can actually mean the most. As Ransom suggests: "It's about finding ways to live well in the meantime." ■

*Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.*

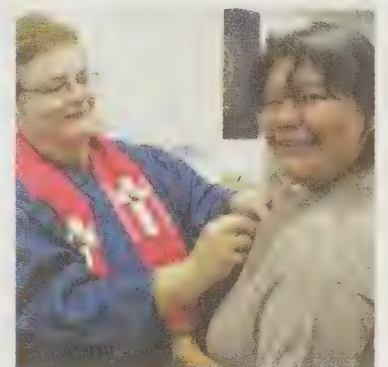
# BUILDING HOPE

## Making a Difference

**Tina**, a Winnipeg inner city community member, has been dropping into the mission for 10 years. The day of her baptism she decided to stop abusing solvents and has managed to honor that vow for 4 years now. **Your contributions make a difference in lives.**



**WICM**



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Presbyterian Church  
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# EQUIPPING AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION

SEEKING HOPE AND HEALING. BY MARK GEDCKE

**LAST NOVEMBER** I travelled to Orillia to be part of the Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation Conference, which was led by First Nations people who are part of the Presbyterian, United and Anglican Churches. There were over a hundred of us there: female and male, native and non-native.

On Thursday evening, our group participated in an exercise that helps people understand our shared history. Blankets were laid on the floor in the middle of where we were sitting in a circle that was two rows deep. An invitation was shared to come stand on the blankets. Those of us who came into the center represented the millions of people who lived in this land before the Europeans arrived. We were part of distinct self-governing societies that made up hundreds of nations. At the start, we were able to walk freely among the blankets. We smiled and kibitzed together. By the end, I was back sitting in the circle because I had been among those who represented Native people who had been killed by diseases brought when the Europeans came. Those people still in the middle of the circle were left on small pieces of blanket, isolated from one another.

During the blanket exercise we heard that the British North America Act, that helped establish Canada, declared that aboriginal people were under the protection of the Domin-

ion. The Canadian government's goals were assimilation, enfranchisement and civilization. And these goals are still with us today. They are the foundation of the Indian Act that still helps to govern our relationship with First Nations today.

When we struggle with understanding why the residential school system that our church helped run went so very wrong, and caused such overwhelming hurt, the answer becomes clear. For all of our good intentions and for all the benefits that our culture shared with the Native culture, we sought to absorb them, so that they would no longer exist as a distinct group of people.

So, residential schools are not an isolated act that we can apologize for and get on with life. They represent a dominant way that my European ancestors entered into relationship. This means that the seeds planted by the BNA and by residential schools are still with us today. The distrust and the anger that I sense in myself towards Native peoples come from those thorny seeds planted generations ago. And we need to root these thorns and thistles out of the garden so there is more room for fruit bearing plants. But how do we do this?

On Friday morning, Elder Grafton Antone shared seven traditional teachings: honesty, humility, wisdom, cour-

age, respect, generosity, love. He then told a story, that I will share:

The Creator sends an angel to the Ojibway, for there is fighting and disharmony in the community. The Creator tells the angel to look for the one who will share the true teachings and help bring peace. So the angel flies down, passing over all the old ones (the elders), but the right one is not among them. The angel goes back to the Creator. "I cannot find the one who will bring peace." "Go back down. Look some more," says the Creator. So, the angel flies over the parents, the uncles and the aunts. Disappointed, he reports back to the Creator. Again, the angel goes out. This time the angel flies to the youth, to the children, and finally a newborn baby. "Ah! Here is the one!" The baby receives the wisdom that the Ojibway need. By the time he has received it he is old, and has long, white hair. Yet, when he returns to his community, his parents are still there, and all the people welcome him.

Elder Grafton's message to us in the church: give back the wisdom you took away by actions like the residential schools.

But how are we to do this?

On Saturday morning, I listened intently to Marie Wilson, one of the three Truth and Reconciliation commissioners. The Truth and Reconciliation



Commission is part of a court settlement in response to a class action suit of residential school survivors. The other parties involved are the Canadian government and the churches that ran the schools: Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United.

Over the five year mandate, starting last June, the commissioners will lead the effort to gather and document the history of residential schools. They will gather experiences from those who went to the schools, those who ran them, and from the second and third generations of people who have been affected. The commission will seek the safe keeping of hard materials like documents and pictures. There will be a final report with recommendations to all the partners: the government, the churches and the survivors

Marie Wilson shared that the three

commissioners begin their meetings together with prayer. Each one has sought out spiritual guides for themselves. They are working together in a spirit of cooperation. Their goal is healing of First Nations people and of those who immigrated to this land. It is their hope that the commission can help us to build communities of peace and cooperation together.

As I learn about our shared history and the relationship of native and non-native peoples in this land, I feel much sorrow and regret. I am tempted to give up, keep my distance, and resign myself to the status quo. But, as I experience the leadership found among the First Nations people, I realize there is much reason for hope and healing for us all. ■

*Rev. Mark Gedcke is minister at Calvin, Kitchener, Ont.*

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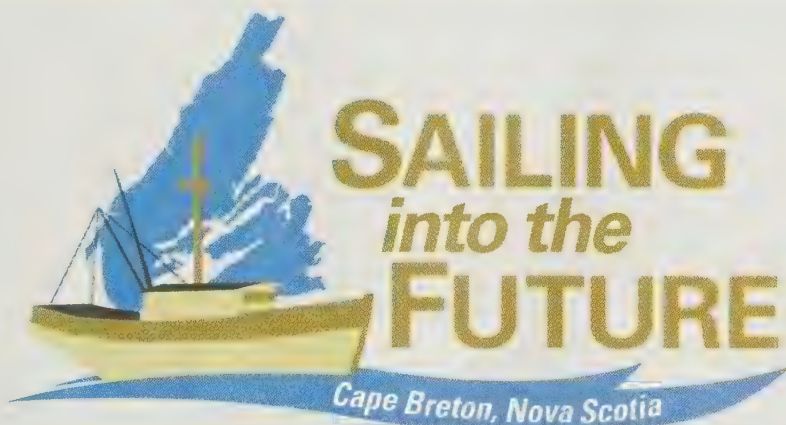
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## 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada



Follow the proceedings online at:  
[www.presbyterian.ca/ga10](http://www.presbyterian.ca/ga10)

In early June, more than three hundred Presbyterian elders and ministers from across Canada will gather in Sydney, Nova Scotia as commissioners to our annual General Assembly.

Please pray for safe travels and for guidance as they discern God's will for our church.



# Thank You!

On behalf of the national committees, national office staff, and the entire Presbyterian community, we would like to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to everyone who has made the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada a success.

In particular, the Local Arrangements Committee and the many volunteers from the Presbytery of Cape Breton deserve our gratitude for all of their hard work.

**The Rev. Stephen Kendall**

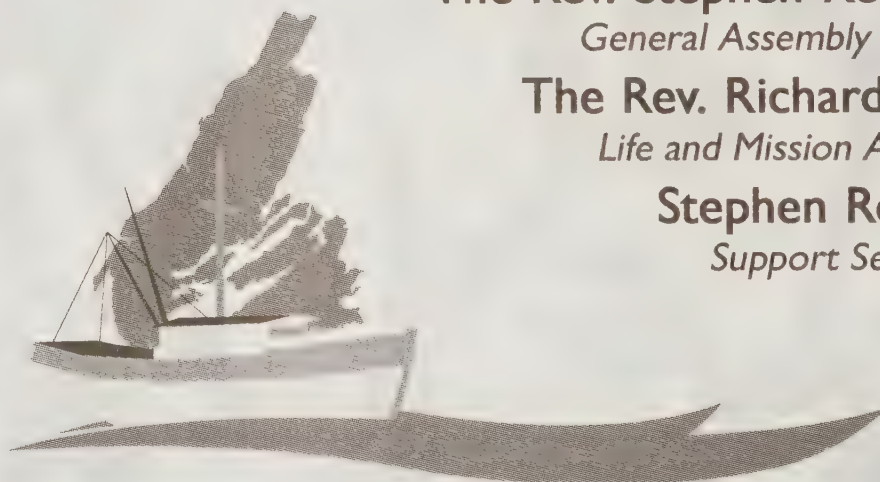
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# Rev. Harvey Self

## Moderatorial Year

### 2009-2010

#### The Dash Poem

(Revised) by Harvey Self;  
Apologies to Linda Ellis

I heard of a man who stood to speak  
When his Moderatorial Year was done.  
He referred to the dates in the Blue Book,  
And how quickly they passed anon.

He noted that first came his Induction  
On a warm night in Hamilton,  
And now how his journey had taken him,  
To the College of Cape Breton.

He shared with the Assembly of all the time  
He spent travelling far and near,  
To represent the PCC  
Always lending a listening ear.

He shared that his message was simple  
"Love others as you too are loved.  
Make sure that your life really matters  
To our Lord and King above."

**Subscript:** The Dash Poem—A life, a career, a significant period of time, is described by the date it began and the date it ended with a dash in the middle. The dash represents the life of that person, that event, that period of significance.



4. At WICM in Winnipeg.
5. Induction as the Moderator of the 135th General Assembly.
6. With Presbyterian chaplains Dwight Nelson, Bonnie Mason and Dave Kettle at the Chaplain's School, CFB Borden.



1. Rev. Harvey Self with Presbyterian chaplain Ken McRae at CFB Winnipeg.
2. With his wife, Jayne in Ghana
3. With Rev. Glenn Ball receiving prayer shawls at Kildonan, Winnipeg.



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **Carluka, Ancaster, Ont.**

Jean Ford, middle, a lifetime Presbyterian, celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends in March, at St. Paul's, Carluka. She's seen with Nancy Morrow and Paul Morrow.



## **St. Paul's, Vaughan, Ont.**

Rev. Dr. Kenneth McMillan, moderator of the 105th General Assembly, celebrated his 94th birthday in March with family and friends at St. Paul's. Pictured are clerk of session David Rutherford, McMillan, and his daughters, Barb Donaldson and Catherine McGee.



## **Portage La Prairie, Man.**

Katie Lancaster and Celine Ross of First Presbyterian practice a puppet drama for the Sunday school. On our website, Ian MacKenzie, also of First, retires after 19 years as clerk of presbytery. There's a circle-of-life thing happening at Portage La Prairie.





### St. Paul's, Ingersoll, Ont.

St. Paul's has a Care and Share Prayer group which meets weekly. They also have a prayer shawl ministry, led by parish nurse, Fran Hudson. More than 150 prayer shawls have been given to those in need of comfort.



### St. Paul's, Hampton, N.B.

Peggy and Jim Ballard celebrated their 70th anniversary last September at St. Paul's. Jim had served within the pastoral charge as a catechist for 13 years, and after a period of living in Ontario, returned to live in the Hampton area. In the picture with Jim and Peggy are Rev. Kent and Marlene Burdett.



### Calvin, Miramichi East, N.B.

Nobody said fundraising has to be arduous. You can have fun doing it! Learn from the youth at Calvin who "rocked" in January and raised \$1,100 for PWS&D's Haiti relief efforts. Seen here: Emily, Aaron, Tristen and Derrica rock for Haiti.

online extra

SEE MORE PHOTOS ONLINE AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)

A Robbie Burns dinner in Kirkwall raises \$1,750 for PWS&D. Three hundred and thirty pounds of food for a local food bank at Knox, Guelph. Some stylish ladies wearing heritage hats in Salmon Arm.



# Market Place

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Halifax, N.S.; Saint David; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-9212; [lmawhinney@bellaliant.net](mailto:lmawhinney@bellaliant.net).  
 Hanwell, N.B.; St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. D. E. Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; [minister@sapc.ca](mailto:minister@sapc.ca).  
 Kensington and New London, P.E.I.; Interim Moderator Rev. Ian Glass, 15 Messer Ave., Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 6N5; 902-892-1463; [glassicjr@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:glassicjr@pei.sympatico.ca).  
 River John and Toney River, N.S.; St. George's and St. David's; Interim Moderator Rev. Lara Scholey, 1159 Campbell Hill Rd., RR 2, Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0; 902-485-6137; [bethel@bellaliant.com](mailto:bethel@bellaliant.com).

### SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Ingleside, Ont., St. Matthew's; Full-time, Interim Moderator Rev. Mark Bourgon; PO Box 704, Ingleside, ON K0C 1M0; 613-537-8929; [markbourgon@yahoo.com](mailto:markbourgon@yahoo.com).  
 Montreal, St. Andrew and St. Paul; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Dale Woods, 3495 University Street, Montreal, QC H3A 2A8; 514-288-5256 ext.202; [dswoods2@gmail.com](mailto:dswoods2@gmail.com).  
 Ottawa, St. Andrew's; Director of Christian Development; Interim Moderator Rev. Susan Clarke, c/o St. Andrew's Kars Presbyterian Church, PO Box 381, Maitland, ON K0E 1T0; 613-348-3088; [revsvclarke@yahoo.ca](mailto:revsvclarke@yahoo.ca).  
 Ottawa, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. George Zimmerman, c/o Knox Presbyterian Church, 120 Lisgar St., Ottawa, ON K2P 0C2; 613-692-0009; [G.L.Zimmerman@bell.net](mailto:G.L.Zimmerman@bell.net).  
 Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Seung Kim, 5 Jamie Cres., Petawawa, ON K8H 3N2; 613-687-2463; [seung37@hotmail.com](mailto:seung37@hotmail.com).  
 Smith Falls, Ont., Westminster; Full-time; Interim Moderators Revs. Brian and Alison Sharpe, 460 Raglan St. S., Renfrew, ON K7V 1R8; 613-432-5452; [maryalison@sympatico.ca](mailto:maryalison@sympatico.ca).

### SYNOD OF CENTRAL, NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO AND BERMUDA

Ashburn-Brooklin, Burns; Full time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Lee, 2501 Warden

Ave., Toronto, ON M1W 2L6; 647-290-0461; [kevinmaclee@bridlewoodpc.ca](mailto:kevinmaclee@bridlewoodpc.ca).  
 Aurora, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 ext. 223 or 1-800-619-7301; [dmuir@presbyterian.ca](mailto:dmuir@presbyterian.ca); [www.standrewspresbyterian.com](http://www.standrewspresbyterian.com).  
 Bramalea, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 55 Edith St., Georgetown, ON L7G 3B4; 905-877-1252; [stpaulspresbyterian@bellnet.ca](mailto:stpaulspresbyterian@bellnet.ca).  
 Collingwood, First; Director of Youth & Family Ministries, Full-time; Contact Mr. Don Wright, First Presbyterian Church; 200 Maple St., Collingwood, ON L9Y 2R2; please no phone calls to church; [firstchurch@rogers.com](mailto:firstchurch@rogers.com).  
 Elora, Knox and Alma, St. Andrew's; Full-time two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Marty Molengraaf; [mmolengraaf@sympatico.ca](mailto:mmolengraaf@sympatico.ca).  
 Guelph, Kortright; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Wayne Dawes, c/o Knox's Galt Presbyterian Church, 2 Grand Ave. S., Cambridge, ON N1S 2L2; 519-621-8120; [sdawes@knoxsgalt.org](mailto:sdawes@knoxsgalt.org).  
 Huntsville, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gary Robinson; 705-746-9612; [gary@standrewsparrysound.org](mailto:gary@standrewsparrysound.org).  
 Midland, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 47 Owen Street, Barrie, ON L4M 3G9; 705-728-3991; [rick@standrewsbarrie.ca](mailto:rick@standrewsbarrie.ca).  
 Newmarket, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; [minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca](mailto:minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca).  
 Stirling, St. Andrew's; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jennifer Cameron, 520 Bridge St. E., Belleville, ON K8N 1R6; 613-962-8771; [jenn.cameron@cogeco.ca](mailto:jenn.cameron@cogeco.ca).  
 Toronto, Toronto Korean; Senior Minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kyung-Seuk Min, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, ON M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963; [www.tkpc.org](http://www.tkpc.org).

### SYNOD OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

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 Beamsville, St. Andrew's and Smithville; Interim Moderator Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi; c/o First North Pelham Presbyterian Church, 606 Metler Rd., RR 3, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0; 905-892-4716; [vasar@talkwireless.ca](mailto:vasar@talkwireless.ca).  
 Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Half-time; Rev. Steve Boose, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1V5; 519-245-2292; [revboose@bellnet.ca](mailto:revboose@bellnet.ca).  
 Brantford, Central; Interim Moderator Joel Sherbino; 519-442-2842; [joel@parispresb.ca](mailto:joel@parispresb.ca).  
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 Fingal, Knox; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Steeper; 519-438-3492; [ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca](mailto:ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca).  
 Grimsby, St. John's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Garfield Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church, 865 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; 905-383-6012; [ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca](mailto:ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca).  
 Hamilton, Heritage Green; Half-time; Moderator Rev. Stephen Jenvey, 262 Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E1; 905-628-6675; [Rev.steve@bell.net](mailto:Rev.steve@bell.net).  
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Rev. Terry Ingram, 970 Oxford St. W.,  
London, ON N6H 1V4; 519-471-2290;  
tingram@oakridge.london.on.ca.  
Niagara Falls, Chippawa; Assistant Minister;  
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Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator  
Rev. Ena van Zoeren, PO Box 421,  
Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931;  
enavanz@gmail.com.  
Teeswater, Knox and Kinlough; Interim  
Moderator Rev. Chuck Moon, PO Box 1823,  
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Please contact our Interim Moderator: Rev. George Beals c/o Burlington East Presbyterian Church  
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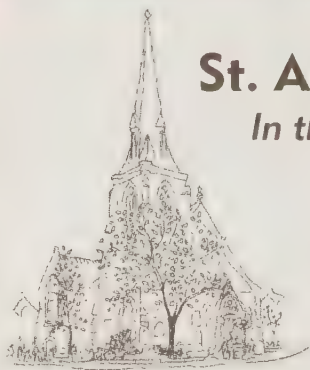
### SYNOD OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Winnipeg, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator  
Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd.,  
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peterwwpres@mts.net.

### SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

Regina, First; Co-Interim Moderators  
Rev. Ina Golaï, 718 Elm Cres., Weyburn,  
SK S4H 0S7; 306-842-1942; golaï@sasktel.  
net and Rev. Devon Pattemore, 66 Park St.,  
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780-756-6320; jebryden@shaw.ca.

Sherwood Park, Alta., Sherwood Park; Interim  
Moderator Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf,  
c/o Dayspring Presbyterian Church,  
11445 40 Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 0R4;  
780-293-0618; dpcprev@telus.net.

## SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

No vacancies at this time.

## Obituaries

BEAN, WINNIFRED, New Glasgow, N.S.,

widow of Rev. Dr. E. H. Bean, lifelong  
supporter of missions, youth, AMS,  
PWS&D and all things Presbyterian, friend  
and lifelong letter writer to missionaries,  
died July 21, 2009 at age 82.

DUNN, FRANCES ELEANOR (ROBINSON),  
died April 15, 2010 in her 100th year  
in Nanaimo, B.C. She served the church  
with her husband in British Guiana,  
Kamloops, B.C., several RCAF stations,  
the Kenora Fellowship Centre, and  
Garden Village Church, Burnaby, B.C.

She was predeceased by her husband,  
Rev. Dr. James Dunn and her sister, Jean  
Robinson. She is survived by her sons,  
Zander (Nancy) and James (Janice); by  
her daughter, Sharon Gwynne-Vaughan

(Llew); by nine grandchildren and 11  
great-grandchildren.

PAUL, DR. GEORGE, faithful member and  
respected elder of Knox Presbyterian  
Church, Dundas, Ont., died Feb. 15, 2010.  
A kind and wise man of deep faith who  
served God with humility and grace.

STEWART, FLORENCE, passed away at age  
92 on March 17, 2010 at Albright Manor,  
Beamsville, Ont. A former Sunday school  
teacher, WMS member, and long-time  
member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian  
Church, Beamsville. Survived by two  
daughters, Harla (Rev. John) Yoos and  
Sally (Ken) Pullin; three grandchildren;  
and four great-grandchildren. ■

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## PRESBYTERIAN RECORD ON THE ROAD!

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General Assembly from  
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September

Connie Purvis goes to  
**Malawi**

October

Andrew Faiz reports from the  
**Road to Emmaus**

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# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON



## A Time for All Things

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

- Are you glad summer is finally here?
- Is summer your favourite season?
- What do you like about it?
- Do you sometimes wish it could be summer all the time?

What are your top two favourite things about each of the other seasons:



Autumn

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



Winter

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



Spring

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

God's plan for the world was to have growth and change.  
He created a season for everything under heaven.  
Seasons of growing and seasons of harvesting come and go.  
The sun and the moon come and go, as do the day and night.  
Life is always changing, yet in the midst of those changes,  
God provides.

Read Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

Dear Lord,  
Thank you that you have a plan  
for the world and for me, too.  
Help me to see signs of growth  
and change, and to give praise  
to you when I do.  
Amen.



## I know that the Bible has a lot to say about underindulgence because I am an incorrigible overindulger in almost every category of my life

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

gence, from artery-clogging food and drink to poverty-causing consumerism, to greenhouse gas-belching travel, takes you to one place, essentially the same place the overindulgent waxwing ended up. Doesn't the Christian faith have any sage spiritual advice to save us?

It turns out it does. I am going to attempt to be very clever and invent a word here to describe what the Christian faith has to say about overindulgence. The word is "underindulgence." I'll use it in a phrase: the spirituality of underindulgence, or perhaps better put, the spiritual discipline of underindulgence. I know the Bible has a lot to say about underindulgence because I am an incorrigible overindulger in almost every category of my life and every time I flip open my Bible I am exposed. Overindulgence is rooted in self, myself. It is a me, my, mine occupation. But from cover to cover in the Bible, the welfare of the community is put above the welfare of the individual, so much so that every blessing that a generous God freely gives is required to be generously shared with the community.

Generosity begets generosity in the Bible. That's a form of the spiritual discipline of underindulgence and it is found in its highest form in the celebration of Jubilee. On the Day of Atonement, once every 50 years, after some joyful horn playing, liberty was proclaimed in all the land. All property bought or confiscated was returned to its original owner, all debts incurred were cancelled, and all who were made slaves were set free (Leviticus 25:10). Jubilee was a huge 'pay it forward' scheme and the basis of it was that you could afford to give up all you owned today because God was going to give to you what you needed tomorrow anyway. God provides, God always had, God always did, God always would. You could always trust

God to be generous with you, so be generous with your neighbour. Don't strive to get, strive to give. The point to Jubilee in the Hebrew scriptures is liberty, not just to set at liberty those who have not, but just as much, to set at liberty those who have. The year of Jubilee was anticipated for years and as such it was a huge metaphor for daily living that taught the people of God to not be possessed by their possessions, but rather to be set free by totally trusting God for provision. It was a bicentennial celebration of the daily spiritual discipline of underindulgence, of living your life joyfully and freely trusting God to provide and seeking first God's justice for the poor and oppressed by sharing what you were provided with.

And wouldn't you know it, Jesus taught the same liberty-generating Jubilee lifestyle in the New Testament. He taught it to the rich young ruler who was invited to give up all that he had to obtain the liberty of following Jesus. He taught it to his disciples when he looked at the rich young ruler and said it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the liberty of the reign of God (Matthew 19:21-23). He taught it in the Parable of the Sower when he spoke about the worry of wealth and the deceitfulness of riches choking out

the life-giving Word of God (Matthew 13:22). He taught it when he told his disciples that unless they gave up all they owned they could not enter the liberty of the Kingdom (Luke 14:33). Liberty through the spiritual discipline of underindulgence is what Jesus is teaching when he says to give up worrying about overindulging yourself with what you will eat, drink or wear, rather trust God to provide what you need and seek first his Kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34).

While the little bird in my head is chirping away at me to do the cedar waxwing thing and become captive to pigging out on all the good stuff I see in the world all around me, Jesus teaches me: Set yourself free with the spiritual discipline of underindulgence. Trust God to provide and become a jubilee kind of person, freed from the stress of possessing and generously giving of what you have been generously given. Be like the Apostle Paul who practiced the same spiritual discipline and found contentment in all circumstances (Philippians 4:12). ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*



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# The Spiritual Discipline of Underindulgence

SET YOURSELF FREE. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**THERE** was a loud crash at the back door. Our son, Halden and daughter, Chelsea were both working in the kitchen. The noise shocked them. What ever had hit the door was pretty significant for it almost broke the window. Halden eventually peered out the door and saw the culprit. It was a young cedar waxwing, which was lying on its back on the deck. It was stoned, more than likely stoned dead. It was Saskatoon month.

Every year when the Saskatoon berries ripen off around our country home there are so many berries that most of them ferment on the bushes. Several species of birds love them this way but none more than the young cedar waxwings. Unfortunately the ripening and fermenting happens just about the time the adolescent cedar waxwings have left the nest and are really getting into flight school. And doubly unfortunately, these juvenile waxwings, like juveniles of most species, haven't yet grown much in the way of brains, at least the part that is responsible for restraint. And so they eat/drink till they are stoned and

then they really think they can fly. Part of what they think they can do in their inebriated state is fly right through the reflection in our windows. And so every Saskatoon season, several dozen intoxicated pubescent waxwings crash dive at full speed into our windows, breaking their foolish necks and very nearly our glass. That was how the young cedar waxwing ended up, out cold and apparently dead on our back deck. It did have the distinction though to be the first ever to perform this drunken aerial maneuver into the little window on our kitchen door.

And so we have yet another overindulgent waxwing story to add to the compendium of overindulgent waxwing stories in our family. But honest, it's not my fault, it's the over indulgence of the young birds.

Overindulgence. It seems to me the young waxwings fit right into North American society. Everything we do in our culture seems to be overindulgent. Every form of communication seems to scream at me—indulge yourself, you are worth it, you deserve it, it's your right, it's good for you. But the truth of the matter is, overindul-

continued on page 49





## St. Giles', Prince George, B.C.

SUBMITTED BY MARLENE ROBERTS • PHOTOS BY HERBERT HILDER

St. Giles' in Prince George, B.C., is a building of concrete and wood. The main feature on the outside is a pillar with a cross on the top. The interior is average and needs some renovations.

But St. Giles' is so much more than this. On Sunday mornings, you will see members of the congregation greeting one another with a friendly smile and inquiring about their week or their health.

The children sing songs of praise to the accompaniment of the piano and various instruments including noisemakers.

The sermon is from the Bible but is pertinent to days living. The congregation is quiet while the minister is talking.

Prayers are then said for the people and requests for prayers are made.

The focus of the service is worshipping God. You can feel God's presence in the sanctuary and this is what makes St. Giles' a truly beautiful church.





# Record Recognized for Excellence

Judge says church 'should be very proud of the Record.'

The *Presbyterian Record* is proud to announce it was named Best Denominational Magazine in North America at the Associated Church Press awards. Below is a list of all the awards the *Record* received at both ACP and at the Canadian Church Press this past May. This belongs to everybody who had a hand in producing the magazine. Thank you!

## Canadian Church Press Awards May 2010

### A.C. Forrest Memorial Award

**FIRST PLACE**—BREAKING THE SILENCE

Authors: Sandra Moll and Kristine O'Brien  
February 2009 issue

### News Story – Magazine

**THIRD PLACE**—PARK PRAYS FOR TAR SANDS

Author: Connie Purvis  
July/August 2009 issue

### Features – Magazine

**FIRST PLACE**—BREAKING THE SILENCE

Authors: Sandra Moll and Kristine O'Brien  
February 2009 issue

### Opinion Piece

**THIRD PLACE**—SHARING REJECTION

Author: Joyce Gladwell  
April 2009 issue

### Column – Magazine

**FIRST PLACE**—THEOLOGY 101

Authors: Various

### Letters to the Editor

**THIRD PLACE**—LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editors: Andrew Faiz and David Harris

### Service Journalism

**FIRST PLACE**—BREAKING THE SILENCE

Authors: Sandra Moll and Kristine O'Brien  
February 2009 issue

### Interview

**THIRD PLACE**—BEYOND CHURCH WALLS

Author: Amy MacLachlan  
January 2009 issue

### Editorial - Magazine

**SECOND PLACE**—SEEKING

DIRECTIONS TO LEAD

Author: David Harris  
April 2009 issue

### Theological Reflection –

**Devotional and Inspirational**

**FIRST PLACE**—REQUIEM TO JIM

Author: David Webber  
January 2009 issue

### Media Review

**SECOND PLACE**—BOOK REVIEWS

Editor: Andrew Faiz  
Authors: Philip Lee, Barry Mack & Jim Kanaris  
May, August and October 2009 issues

### Biblical Interpretation

**THIRD PLACE**—HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Author: Patricia Dutcher-Walls  
June 2009 issue

### Magazine Front Cover

**FIRST PLACE**—THE RURAL CHURCH

Designer: Caroline Bishop  
Artist: Tim Zeltner  
October 2009 issue

### Original Artwork

**FIRST PLACE**—THE RURAL CHURCH

Artist: Tim Zeltner  
October 2009 issue

### Layout and Design of an Edition – Magazine

**SECOND PLACE**—MAY 2009

Designer: Caroline Bishop  
Editors: David Harris, Andrew Faiz

## Associated Church Press Awards May 2010

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### Theological Reflection: Short Format

**FIRST PLACE**—LOVE THAT UNDERSTANDS

Author: Michael Walker  
November 2009 issue

### Illustration, With Article or Cutline

**FIRST PLACE**—BREAKING THE SILENCE

Illustrator: Michelle Thompson  
February 2009 issue

### Photography, With Article or Cutline: Magazine

**SECOND PLACE**—MALAWI

Photographer: Paul Jeffrey  
Designer: Caroline Bishop  
August 2009 issue

### Devotional/Inspirational: Long Format

**THIRD PLACE**—REQUIEM TO JIM

Author: David Webber  
January 2009 issue

### Magazine Cover

**SECOND PLACE**—CANADA YOUTH '09

Designer: Caroline Bishop  
September 2009 issue

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—Amanda Wickenheister, young adult representative

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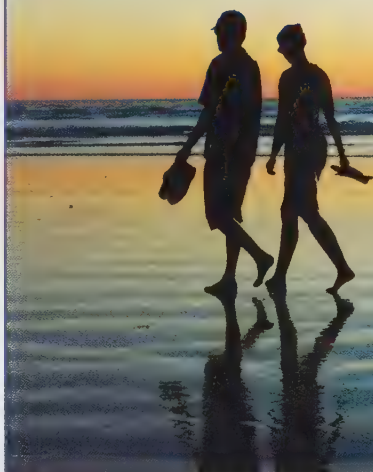
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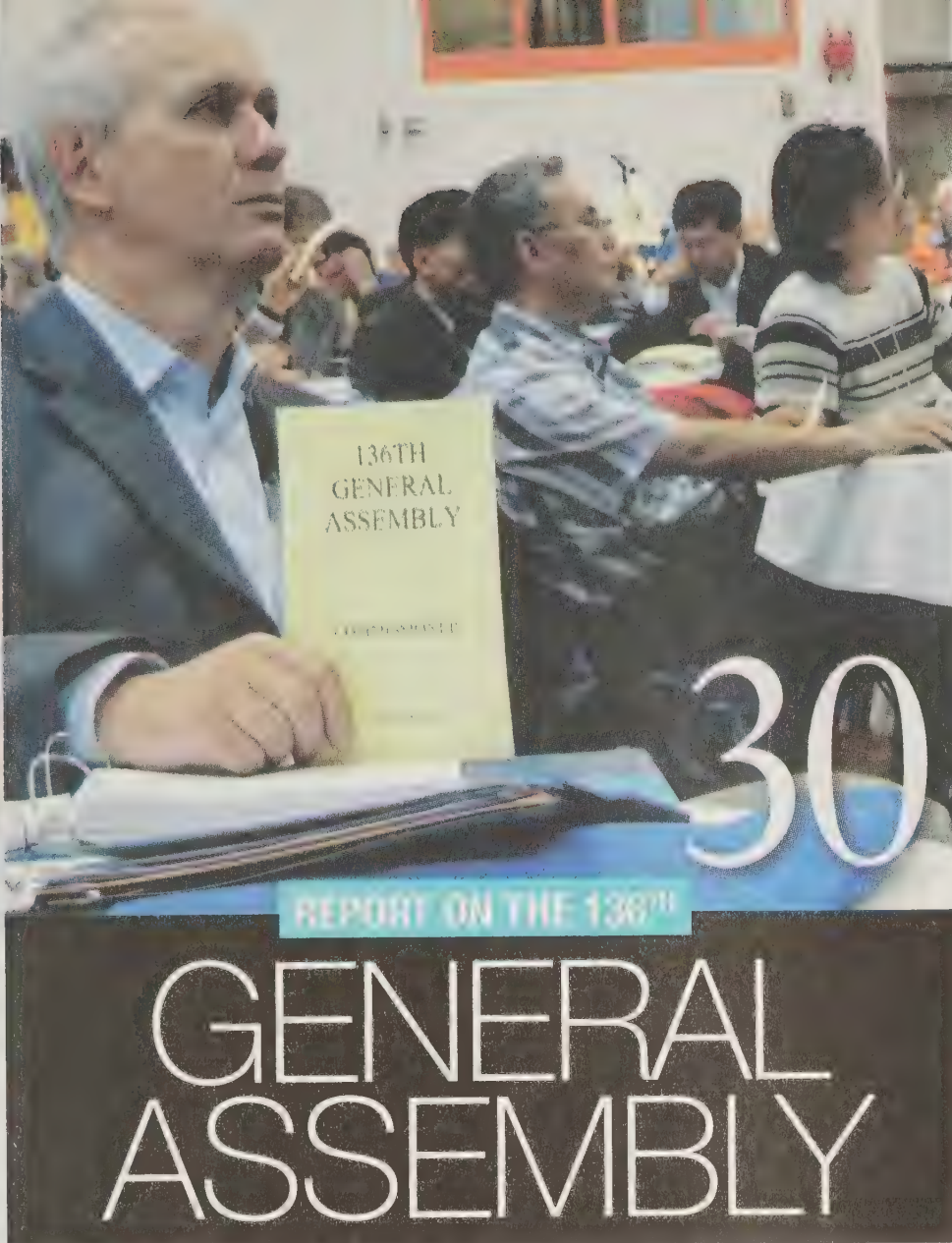
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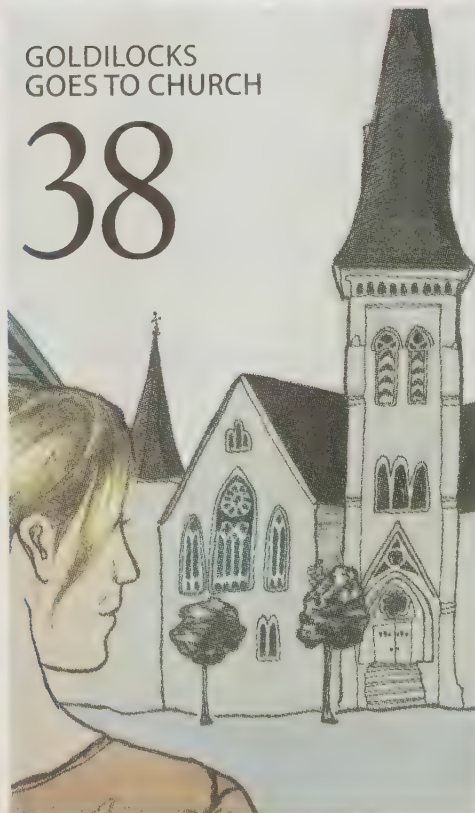
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# Forgive Us Our Sins

WE NEED TO DO MORE THAN APOLOGIZE AND LISTEN. BY DAVID HARRIS

There's a great scene in the movie *Invictus* in which the newly elected South Africa president Nelson Mandela is justifying his policy of including the whites under whose racist policies he was imprisoned for 27 years. In his characteristic short, declarative sentences, he says:

*Forgiveness liberates the soul.*

*It removes fear.*

*That is why it is such a powerful weapon.*

I watched this movie just a few days after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its work in Winnipeg. Canada's commission is modeled on the South African TRC, which sought to heal the wounds of that country's racist policies, including the bantustans that were apparently modeled on Canada's native reserves.

What goes around certainly does come around. We can only hope that what comes around this time is better than what we sent around last time.

Too often, we still fail to be humble in our faith and culture. Our reflex is defensive.

Even those who most want to heal the wounds of the past flounder. In newspaper stories about the opening of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, various church leaders were quoted as saying they offered to pray for victims, that cash wasn't the answer to native problems and that Brother So-and-so was upset that his good work in the schools will be swept aside by other stories.

We should assume that all these responses came from a good place. That does not make them any less naïve and misguided.

Who are we to assume the superior position that we can pray so effectively for victims? Who are we to tell them



**Too often, we still fail to be humble in our faith and culture. Our reflex is defensive**

that cash isn't the answer to their problems? (It's the basis of all our litigation.) And who are we to be so quick to point out that good deeds were done in an evil system? Dietrich Bonhoeffer's martyrdom did not expiate the collective sin of Germany in permitting the rise of Hitler and Nazism. At best, Christians might say that where sin abounds, so too does grace.

So what should we do? Perhaps just apologize and listen. That's what happened at General Assembly during the presentation on the TRC. Moderator Herb Gale apologized again for the wrongs committed in Presbyterian-run schools. And commissioners listened to some stories.

One of those stories was told by Terry Paul, chief of the Membertou nation on whose traditional lands the assembly was meeting.

"It is here that our lives and souls are. The souls of our ancestors are buried here. It is believed by all of us through our elders that every shovelful you turn here in Atlantic Canada has the soul of our ancestors. I would also like to wel-

come the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because we believe it's an important part of the process of healing. It is the important part because we want to make sure the people in this country hear our voices. Hear what was done. Hear about the legacy that the residential schools left. For me, it's very difficult to think about let alone talk about.

"It is very difficult to go back to that five-year-old that I left. That's who we will be talking about. That's who we will be talking to. Thousands and thousands of five-year-olds. But I know, and many of our people know, that it's important to forgive. It's important to forgive so you don't stay being a victim. You need to forgive if you're going to lift that heavy burden off your shoulders. We need to lift that burden of that five-year-old.

"I know for many years I blamed the church. I blamed the government. I blamed a religion, I blamed all the religions. In fact I even blamed God. But it's not God. It's not the religions. It's not the churches that did this. It's people. It's people like you and I who had a different belief about us. People who believed we were less than they were, nothing more than animals. But here we are. Ready to forgive. And live. Side by side. And today, I can say to you, and I can say to the reconciliation committee, that I'm not only a survivor. I'm a witness to this horrible history. Thank you."

Let us hope we can be forgiven. ■

*David Harris*



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## Seeking Mutual Respect

*Re Ethnicity, Identity and Isolation, April*

The cover story by Andrew Faiz is excellent. The article provides a voice for us who, although members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for decades and decades, have always found the Highland/Lowland/Irish preoccupations to be one of the church's less attractive characteristics.

ENID POTTINGER, HAMILTON, ONT.

While the article is a long time coming and certainly shows the changed and changing church, Faiz falls slightly into the trap of generalizing towards a culture.

While indeed the background of the Presbyterian Church is Scottish, I take issue with the assumption that those of us with Scottish backgrounds have "the ability to roll Rs." Not true!

Good point about those silly, pseudo-Scottish celebrations such as the Kirkin of the Tartan (ancestor worship?) and Tartan Sundays. Most are attended by dewy-eyed Scots and Scots Canadians, inserting traditions that just didn't happen back there.

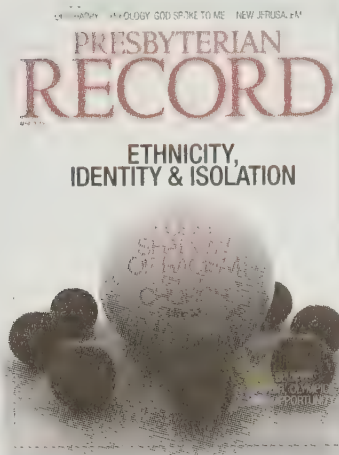
ROD SCOTT, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

The things I found most challenging about the Presbyterian Church were attitudes and ideas from earlier times which I simply could not relate to. I knew nothing of the complicated history of Scottish Presbyterianism, and just wondered why it still mattered. For example, an elder who was still bitter about church union shocked me. Good grief, I thought, that was way before I was born.

LINDA WHITEHEAD, MIDLAND, ONT.

Alcoholics Anonymous owes much of its success to the genuine empathy its members share with each other. It keeps ritual matters secondary—and it works. Mentally ill people in group therapy share their feelings with each other in a way that "outsiders" have

# Letters



## write to us

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difficulty understanding.

And so it goes—the point being that perhaps ethnic and diverse individuals cannot be fully accepted. Walking in another's shoes has merit but is not totally effective.

Seeking mutual respect and acceptance should be paramount, an ideal, a worthy goal achievable with the help of ongoing prayer.

God would approve.

J. GORDON NEAL, WHITBY, ONT.

Andrew Faiz makes the point that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has been taken over by the Highland Scots. If this indeed is so, then why are there no Gaelic hymns in the *Book* ➤

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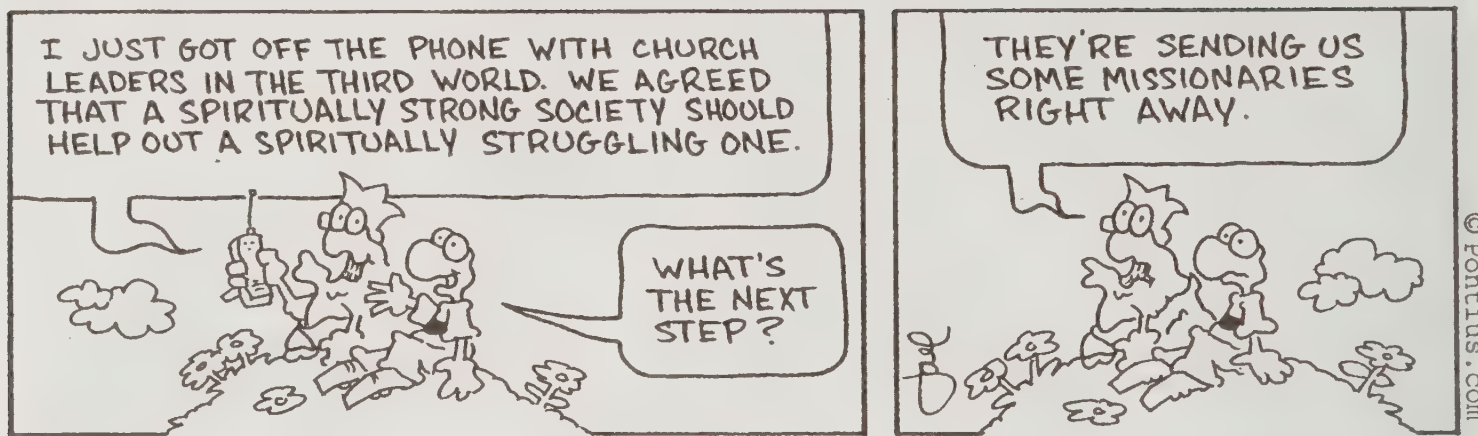
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## Pontius' Puddle



of Praise—not even in the Psalms? I do see hymns in many other languages, including French, Korean, Hungarian, German, Chinese (Mandarin), etc.

Representations were made to include the 23rd Psalm in the Gaelic, to no avail!

WILLIAM A. FISHER, BEDFORD, N.S.

But what about linguistic isolation? While Cheol Soon Park was moderator, the *Record* published his letters in Korean. Can you not publish other letters or material in another language? Why should not every national Sunday bulletin carry a message in some other tongue? Welcome to the Church of

Jesus Christ! This week in Arabic, next week in Hungarian, and after that Inuktitut? To those of another linguistic heritage it would be recognition of their rightful place in the church and an invitation to participate further. What are we waiting for?

IAN S. WISHART, ST. JOHN'S

Rev. Lazlo Bathory, Hungarian Presbyterian minister, in the late 50s or early 60s, served in B.C., ministered to the many Hungarian immigrants who came to Canada following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. He had a rich academic and linguistic background. He had studied the classical languages

of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and was familiar with Russian, Polish and Ukrainian. He spoke French fluently, and probably knew Italian and Spanish as well.

Rev. Oswald J. Smith was founder of the People's Church in Toronto. In the early 40s, I heard him speak in Didsbury, Alta., where I was completing high school. He was an American Presbyterian who had developed a deep interest in missions. People's Church now has a weekly one-hour TV program, *Living Truth* on Vision-TV, featuring the present minister, Charles Price. We find him an excellent preacher and expositor. Someone has stated that this fairly large church is the most ethnically diverse congregation in all of North America. This is another example of Presbyterian influence in Canada.

IVAN S. GAMBLE, VANCOUVER

### Comparative Religion

I have appreciated the prominence given in Theology 101 to the exposition of some major world religions. It affords important learning for Christians in the Canada of today. Dr. McLelland's learned and discerning accounts avoid the relativism suggested in the traditional designation "comparative religion".

Years ago, I found myself a newcomer to the prevailing Hindu society of Guyana short months after attending the classrooms of Professors Walter Bryden and Karl Barth. From



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them I had been warned of the idolatrous tendencies of the religions generally in their quest of an ideal completeness gained through the resources of human culture and historical achievement. Humanist strains invading Christian institutions were likewise suspect. Before launching into a teaching role, I gained another perspective during several evenings spent as a guest at the home of my neighbour, a pandit (teacher). I encountered there a quiet conviction, gentle piety and moral earnestness which chastened the hubris that the pandit may have seen or suspected in me.

Confessions of faith emerging in conflictual situations and the testimony of the poor and oppressed have been markers of Christian affirmation. Witnessing to faith in Jesus Christ amid the many ways on offer toward final blessing presents us with a *kairos* moment.

JAMES FARRIS, CHARLOTTETOWN

### Students in our Midst

Kerrisdale is on the west side of Vancouver, relatively close to the University of British Columbia. It's what I would think of as a typical Presbyterian church; having had its heyday, it is now a vibrant and warm, though significantly smaller congregation. Despite its size, it is a community with many strengths; one of the congregation's greatest gifts is its members' ability to welcome new people into its fold and fully accept them as their own. In the year and a half that I have been a part of this community, I have seen this time and again, particularly with the university students who have wandered into our midst.

A few Sundays ago, my husband and I looked out into the congregation to see an entire pew taken up by our smiling university students. I wish I'd had my camera.

This however, is not a typical "target" group. We do not often think

about university students. Regardless, they come to Kerrisdale, and they are welcomed, and Kerrisdale reaps countless rewards from having them as part of our community.

University students make up half of our Sunday school teachers; they are very involved in the program and have great ideas for activities to do with the students; the children love having them as their teachers. There are other students who take part in the library committee and the choir. They take part in Bible studies and book clubs and are always in for potlucks and dinners. They bring a lot of joy to our congregation, and build relationships with many of our congregants.

As we reflect on how much we have appreciated all of our students being a part of our community, we hope that many more students will find a church home in our congregation.

AMY FONSECA, VANCOUVER

### Mystery of all Mysteries

*Re Opening Our Eyes, August*

The New Testament story climaxes in Christ risen and the journey on the Emmaus road is an excellent example of the workings of our unconscious mind. Now bear in mind that Christ risen is the axis upon which Christianity is based; it rests on the belief that Christ triumphed over death and I believe that the wisdom teacher who wrote this story was trying to convey, in the only way he could, that death is not final and that in some form we are all renewed.

Life and death, contrary to all that appears as self-evident, are one, the two in one, the unity of opposites. The unity that defies understanding yet manifests itself to us by its continual renewal on our planet earth.

The problem that religion and philosophy have been trying to solve from the beginning had found a new level of understanding in Christ risen. ➤

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## FRONT Letters

Are we now ready to see that Christ should be clothed today with the language and increasing knowledge of science as an aid to go further and deeper into the mystery of all mysteries?

The problem with language is that the surface representation of thought (in this case words) is open to misinterpretation, and it is only by properly understanding the symbols and the association of ideas that these words represent that we can form a true picture of what is really being conveyed to consciousness.

DENNIS SUTHERLAND, VICTORIA

I am surprised to see the Emmaus Conference referred to as a long-term planning conference. I attended the conference and got the impression that we'll cease to exist while making long-term plans. What we need is immediate resuscitation.

ANNE JAMIESON

ON PREBYTERIANRECORD.CA

### Jails Don't Make Us Safe

Re: *Populist Thuggery, March*

My thanks to our editor's endeavour to help us become rational before large sums of money are spent on building more prisons to cope with longer sentences. History should have taught us that this will not make us any safer, and offers less hope of rehabilitating

the offender. With the exception of the Paul Bernardo and Clifford Olson personality types, correctional centres generally serve as schools to improve the quality of criminal behaviour. Is that what we want? An arborist once told me that when a branch is cut from the tree, many people buy products to apply to the cut; it is of no benefit to the tree but it makes us feel good. That is what usually happens when most people feel that sentencing by itself is the answer.

REV. DR. ARNOLD BETHUNE, FORMER  
CORRECTIONAL CHAPLAIN, GUELPH, ONT.

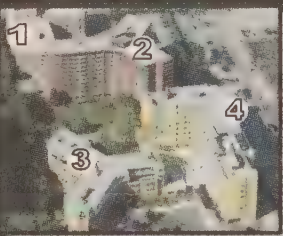
**Note:** All these letters have been edited to allow more voices to share in the conversation. The unedited letters appear on [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca). Fine details suffer in the editing process; we recommend you seek out the full versions online.

### Correction

In our June issue, the article, Promised Lands incorrectly reported the name of Rev. Mark Gaskin's charge. He is minister at St. Andrew's Galt, Cambridge, Ont. We apologize for the confusion. ■

online extra

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# Representative Presbyter

A PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH. BY ANDREW FAIZ



*My reflections* on General Assembly can be found on [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca). In this space I'd like to share a conversation I had on the plane with a commissioner.

The lady sitting beside me is a Mom and Grandmom from a central Ontario town. Her husband passed away some years ago and she lives in an apartment. Her sons live in near enough towns. The trip to Cape Breton was her third by plane; the others were vacations to the United States. It was obvious she was anxious about flying but she had a healthy sense of humour about herself.

This was her first time at General Assembly and she said she learned a lot. She enjoyed following the debates and the conversations but was confused by the process, though she is familiar with Robert's Rules. The process of amendments and discussion, amendments and discussion, is not always easy to follow, particularly in a big room with hundreds of people involved. Motions can often be stacked several deep and it's a challenge to track them up and then clear them in order. Even the pros drop a motion in the process now and then.

I asked her if she was involved in her presbytery, since, obviously she was at assembly because she was a representative elder. She said, "Yes, I go to their meetings." When I made a joke of her use of "their" she laughed and quickly changed it to "our." But it was a quick peak into her world view.

Before I proceed further with this story let me make it clear: I believe this lady to be a representative presbyter of our church. We often make fun of women like her; we joke about the aging of the membership. But this

SO, LET'S PUT  
THIS TOGETHER:  
HARDWORKING  
BUT AGING  
MEMBERS, WHO  
PASTOR TO EACH  
OTHER, ARE LOCAL  
IN THEIR LOYALTY  
BUT INTERNATIONAL  
IN THEIR REACH

lady, and women like her, have spent a lifetime doing the practical work of the church: they make the sandwiches and provide a lot of the pastoral care and teach the children and do the clothing drives and other fundraisers and much, much else. They are the front line workers of local congregations, the ones we take for granted. Somebody still needs to get their hands dirty in congregational life and women like this lady have been doing that for decades.

So, needless to say, for my seatmate on the plane, presbytery is an outsider; her primary loyalty is to her congregation and the church building where it meets. She was baptized and married in that church. Her husband is buried in the adjoining graveyard

where she expects to join him several decades from now. Her children (who no longer go to church) were baptized there.

This is her church; her identity as a Presbyterian (a title she wears proudly) starts with that building and that congregation. And both are vulnerable. On a good Sunday there might be a dozen in the pews; most Sundays see less than half that number. The building is paid for, of course, but it needs work and needs to be heated. There is no minister, though they do have a lay minister. My seatmate occasionally takes the pulpit. (She once overheard one of her sons brag on her sermon to a friend and she's very proud of that!)

Lest you think this is another dead-end story; not true. This little, faithful, aging band of presbyters is involved in a labour-intensive mission which reaches the needy around the world. They also host successful community suppers, none of which has resulted in a new member.

So, let's put this together: Hardworking but aging members, who pastor to each other, are local in their loyalty but international in their reach. They are faithful but somehow have not been able to pass the church-going habit to their children. They realize they are in love with their own history but can't always overcome that intellectual knowledge to undo the symbols of the past (amalgamate, sell the building, etc.). They are warm and hospitable people but cannot convert that into membership.

Sound like anyone you know? ■

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.*



## Despite Fire, Worship Continues

MAJOR DAMAGE SUSTAINED AT ORMSTOWN PRESBYTERIAN. BY JOEL COPPIETERS



A fire at Ormstown Presbyterian Church in Quebec severely damaged the back of the church, while water and soot took their toll on other areas of the building.

DURING THE EARLY morning hours of Friday, June 4 the electrical wires leading to an exterior light above a seldom used back entrance shorted out, smoldered for several hours and then sparked into flame. By the time dawn arrived and the resulting fire had been extinguished, the home of Ormstown Presbyterian Church in Quebec had sustained substantial damage. Several back rooms, including an office and a staircase leading to the basement were destroyed. The doors leading to the sanctuary had been kept closed, apparently preserving it from the worst of the fire damage, but the soot, the smoke and the water all took their toll.

In the hours following the tragedy, the members of the congregation felt strongly that they should hold the following

Sunday's service on the premises.

Opening the double front doors gave enough light and almost enough room for the small congregation to gather in the vestibule. Several people overflowed onto the front steps, sheltered under umbrellas.

The lectionary text had assigned as a gospel lesson for the day the story of a desperate widow. No husband. Her only son carried in a coffin. Destitute and desperate. Until God showed up. This seems to be when He likes to show up.

The closing doxology was performed without a piano or an organ, but the words resound with more truth than they have for a very long time. ■

*Joel Coppieters is a freelance writer.*

## VST Principal Visits Taiwan BY L.E. TED SIVERNS

REV. DR. WENDY FLETCHER, Principal of Vancouver School of Theology, visited the Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan in May. The two institutions have a long established relationship.

Taiwan is the home of three Presbyterian seminaries, three Presbyterian hospitals, four Presbyterian universities, and social work projects too many to list here.

"People were so welcoming," Fletcher said. "There was never a problem with language and getting

from the airport to the High Speed Rail was not difficult."

Tainan Seminary president, Rev. Dr. Fu-Ya Wu welcomed Fletcher. She toured the city and district and the seminary grounds. A Taiwanese minister (and VST graduate) introduced Fletcher to the president and theological faculty at the 50,000-student Chang Jung Christian University. Many of the faculty at Tainan Seminary, as well as Taiwan and Yu-Shan seminaries, have studied at VST or Knox College.

A Tainan Seminary student spends

his summer field placement at VST, with the hope that it will become a two-way placement program between Taiwanese and Canadian students. Faculty too could share in short term or sabbatical-related study.

Following her sermon at the seminary, Fletcher headed to Taipei. There she met the denomination's senior staff and two VST graduates who teach at Yu-Shan Seminary. ■

*Rev. Dr. L.E. Ted Siverns is a visiting teacher in Taiwan.*



# Fresh from the Heart

THE 450TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION. **BY DON MACLEOD**

THIS AUGUST 17, Presbyterians around the world will be celebrating the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. That was the day in 1560 that the Scottish Parliament adopted the Scots Confession as its country's official statement of the Christian faith. A week later, by legislative decrees, the Reformed faith received national endorsement. One act repealed all legislation "contrary to the word of God" and the new Confession, a second terminated the jurisdiction of the pope in Scotland, and a third banned the Roman Catholic mass.

It was a remarkable achievement for a man who had only returned to his native country the year before. John Knox, with five colleagues—all of whom shared his first name—drafted the Scots Confession in a feverish five days prior to its adoption by the Scottish Parliament. The statement, which McGill Prof. Stanford Reid characterized as "Knoxian," reflected Knox's years in "the most perfect scholae of Christ" as he described Geneva. While exiled there, Knox had deeply imbibed the theology of John Calvin. But the Scots Confession was more than merely a repetition of previous confessions, nor would it duplicate later professions.

What will be celebrated this August in churches from Seoul to Sydney, from Philadelphia to Belfast, is the first adoption by a single country of a specifically Reformed declaration of faith. The drafters, a pastoral commitment of six preachers of the word, never lost sight of the parish or the pew in the frantic composing. It was

**What they stood for  
we acknowledge and  
commemorate with thanks  
to their God and ours**

written, as Edward Irving said, "as if it came fresh from the heart of labourious workmen, all the day long busy with the preaching of the truth, and sitting down at night to embody the heads of what they continually taught."

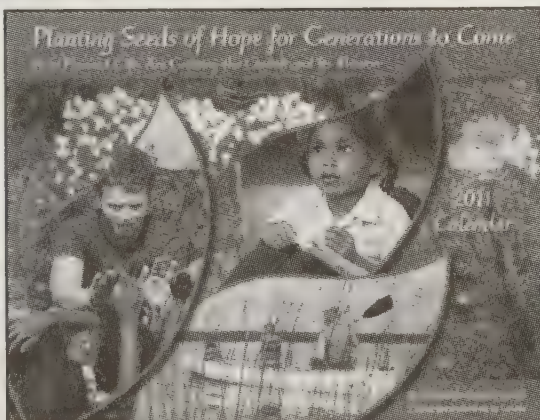
Every 50 years Presbyterian churches have celebrated their achievement, each commemoration saying something about the state of the church at the time. In 1860 there was a Protestant aura to the anniversary. A half century later the emphasis was on ecumenism and a blurring of the Reformed distinctives. In 1960 the Presbyterian Church in Canada, under the leadership of Allan Farris and John

Johnston and in the heyday of denominational triumphalism, devoted the entire year to marking the event with rallies, seminars, articles, and papers, one of which—Stanford Reid's addresses to the Maritime and Toronto and Kingston synods—has been reprinted and is available as a resource from the committee on history.

This year the celebration is particularly timely. The Reformation in Scotland was a renewal movement, a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. It marked a return to the simplicity of the gospel. As the introduction to the Scots Confession states: "If any will note in this Confession one article or sentence repugnant to God's holy word ... admonish us of the same in writing; and we upon our honour and fidelity by God's grace do promise unto him satisfaction from the mouth of God, that is, from his holy scriptures."

The challenge remains unanswered. Four-hundred and fifty years later we celebrate their courage, their consistency, and their commitment. What they stood for we acknowledge and commemorate with thanks to their God and ours. ■

*Rev. Dr. Don MacLeod is convenor of the committee on history.*



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# Parenthood Not Linked to Church Involvement

HAVING KIDS MAY ACTUALLY DECREASE ATTENDANCE, STUDY SAYS. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A NEW STUDY by the California-based Barna Group says churches shouldn't rely on parenthood as a catalyst that will bring people back to church. In a survey of 670 American parents, 50 per cent said having children did not influence their connection to a church, with four per cent saying it actually decreased involvement.

"Many religious workers assume that parenthood motivates people to return to their spiritual traditions and to church attendance," said Barna president David Kinnaman in the study's summary. "Sometimes faith leaders go so far as to simply wait for parenthood to occur, when they figure the 'real work' of ministry can begin."

Children do act as a catalyst for parents. Yet, this is not the most common experience, notes the study. "While parenthood can reset people's priorities, having children is not an automatic faith-starter for most adults. Family background and their personal faith history impact their behaviour."

It isn't surprising then that unchurched parents (60 per cent) reported they were less likely than church parents to change their church-going habits after having children. However, even 41 per cent of church parents said having children did not change their level of church engagement. Attenders of large churches were more likely to increase their level of church involvement, perhaps suggesting that larger churches are more attentive to the needs of families.

Dr. Reginald Bibby would agree with this last point. As a well known researcher of, among other things, congregational behaviour, and a professor of sociology at the University

of Lethbridge in Alberta, Bibby said a ministry that not only speaks to parents, but also offers a meaningful, competent church school for their children is what will make parents come back to (and stay in) church on a regular basis.

"Few people have maintained that mere parenthood leads to religious involvement," Bibby told the *Record* in an email. "The two keys appear to be religious history and the quality of

a time squeeze and doesn't need the added aggravation of bringing kids to a church where they have to struggle to keep them under control, in lieu of the church having a good ministry in place for the children.

"My research documents what most of us know well: that young couples are highly pragmatic about how they spend their time. If they are going to give services time on a regular basis, environments

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'If they are going to give services time on a regular basis, environments have to be created that make it possible for them'

---

ministry available both to the parents and their children."

Bibby said if a couple has been involved with a particular church group, they presumably will expose their children to their church—hence the Barna finding that church parents are more likely than the unchurched to head back to church after having kids. However, and perhaps more importantly, if the church responds to young families by having a conscious and good ministry to children, as well as their parents, then there is "every reason to believe that such 'good ministry' will result in ongoing attendance.

"In short, if the parents can have a positive worship experience and the children can have a positive preschool or church school experience, everyone is happy and will find it worth their while to show up on a fairly regular basis."

Furthermore, said Bibby, having children when both parents are employed outside the home appears to contribute to a decline in church attendance.

"The primary reason is hardly a shocker: the couple is already feeling

have to be created that make it possible for them—and their children—to have an experience that adds to their lives."

Bibby also noted that in charting participation patterns in the post-1960s through the end of the century, he found that with mainline Protestants, a major factor in attendance attrition was the acceleration of dual career parents. In many cases, mainline Protestant groups—notably United, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches—did not respond well to the reality of the new pressures couples were experiencing.

"The result? People did not stop attending regularly because they were mad at the churches; they simply gave them the time they found they warranted under the circumstances, namely occasional attendance.

"The key is meaningful ministry for children and parents alike. If only one of the two is in place, that's not enough. If neither is in place, obviously parents have better things to do with their time." ■

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*Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.*



# Community News Briefs

## Longtime Staffer Leaves Presbyterian College

CAROLINE O'CONNOR, administrative assistant at Presbyterian College for the past 12 years, left at the end of June to pursue new challenges in her life.

"I have really appreciated Caroline's loyalty to the college and her attention to detail," said principal Dr. John Vissers. "She has given us really excellent service."

O'Connor served as administrative assistant to staff and provided support to the board, all in a very intricate framework of collaboration between the Montreal School of Theology, McGill University and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She was also a key link between the college and students and staff, overseeing the operation of a residence in Montreal, and serving as receptionist—all in both official languages.

Her immediate plans include spending time with her parents in her native Scotland and a little travel.

O'Connor was replaced by Jeanette Vink, administrative assistant at the Montreal School of Theology.

Vissers added, "We wish Caroline

all the best and many blessings. We will miss her."—Joel Coppieters

## P.E.I. Church Conquers Oil Spill

THE MEMBERS of Tyne Valley, just west of Summerside, P.E.I., returned to their pews on May 30 for a celebratory worship service. It was the first held in the church since an oil leak was discovered on church grounds on Feb. 3.

The culprit, an exterior tank that had developed a small hole, allowed hundreds of litres of oil to seep into the ground. The cleanup required the removal of more than 20 truckloads of contaminated soil; costs quickly outstripped the small congregation's resources.

About a dozen local businesses, almost 30 churches and 140 individuals from across the country pitched in to help with the bills. Although a final figure had not been released by press time, the board of managers was confident the church could pay an expected \$35,000.

"The Tyne Valley congregation has received such overwhelming, prayerful volunteer and financial support," elder Edward MacLean wrote in a report to the Presbytery of Prince Edward Island. "Session, the Tyne Valley board of managers and members of the congregation have truly felt the presence of God during this crisis as such a positive outcome could not have occurred without the Holy Spirit being at work in our midst."

The tank of heating oil, which formerly sat outside the 140-year-old church, has been moved inside.



A burning bush was planted outside Tyne Valley Presbyterian to commemorate the recovery from an oil tank leak. From left: Glynis Faith, Irene MacLean, Dave Sudsbury, and Gary Naylor.

Tyne Valley is a member of the Richmond Bay Pastoral Charge.—C.Purvis

## Presbyterian Takes Top Award

"I WAS BOTH SURPRISED and thrilled that a dissertation in the humanities, with the words 'dance,' 'music,' and 'Presbyterian' in its title, was given full recognition as a rigorous scholarly work," said Clara Henderson of her winning doctoral dissertation, *Dance Discourse in the Music and Lives of Presbyterian Mvango Women in Southern Malawi*.

It was awarded the University of Indiana's highest prize for graduate research in April. The Ester L. Kinsley Ph.D. Dissertation Award, which considers work in all academic fields, includes a US\$4,000 cash prize and is granted to two dissertations annually: one in the field of science and the other in the humanities.

Henderson spent almost 20 years in Malawi as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. There she worked with the music department of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian's Blantyre synod, which encompasses southern Malawi.

"During my tenure, I became particularly fascinated with the music and dance of the women's guild or *Mvano*," she told the *Record* in an email, noting that the guilds include more than 80,000 women in Blantyre synod ➤



Caroline O'Connor is thanked for 12 years of service at Presbyterian College, Montreal.





### Crieff Hills Renovations Get Underway

More than \$14,000 was raised at an auction on May 15 for the Building a Place Apart Campaign, which supports the planned renovations of the Crieff Hills Community Retreat and Conference Centre. Participants bid on quilts, furniture, paintings, gift certificates and other items. The official groundbreaking also took place during the event, with representatives from the MacLean Estate Committee, the Capital Campaign team and honorary campaign advisors present.

alone. "I was interested in their use of dance to express their Christian faith, to advocate for change in the political structures of their church, to create a

sanctuary for women, and to minister to their local communities."

Henderson received a doctorate degree in folklore and ethnomusicology this year. She currently works as associate director for projects at the University of Indiana's Institute for Digital Arts and Humanities.—C.Purvis

### A Call for Sermon Topics, YouTube Style

REV. SCOTT MCANDLESS of Knox, Leamington, Ont., has issued a request to the unchurched internet users of the world: "Please tell me what to preach about."

In a four-minute video posted on the popular website YouTube, McAndless calls on those who are "not part of the

church, [don't] really want to be part of the church, maybe wouldn't be caught dead in church ... Well, maybe dead, but definitely not before," to tell him what they think are topics worthy of discussion in a Presbyterian sermon.

"It'll make for some really interesting sermons, and will make us approach things from another point of view," he suggested. "It will push us in our faith."

McAndless has asked for preaching topics before. Last summer, members of Knox asked their faith questions via a camera station set up in the church. Questions included: how do we know whether someone enters eternal life? And what is the Presbyterian position on vegetarianism?

The video can be found by searching for its title, "Please tell me what to preach about" on YouTube.com, and sermons are available at [knox-notes.com](http://knox-notes.com).—C.Purvis

### Anglicans Issue Pastoral Statement on Sexuality

GENERAL SYNOD 2010 of the Anglican Church of Canada decided almost unanimously to issue a pastoral statement on human sexuality rather than create any new legislation that might have permitted or inhibited same-sex blessings in the church.

The challenge, said the synod, is to "live together sharing in the mission of Christ entrusted to us, accepting that different local



### 網上課程

本課程是為在加拿大華人教會中服事的長老同工和信徒領袖而設計培訓課程。其主要目的是在引導學員認識不同的領袖模式，並了解個人的事奉型態與風格，進而提升屬靈領袖的領導質素。

從10月18日至11月26日

講師: 陳淑玲博士

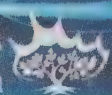
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contexts call at times for different local discernment, decision and action."

"We're not ready as a national church to say, 'We're building this into our doctrine that we approve of same-sex unions,'" Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the church's senior bishop, told a press conference following the close of the General Synod in Halifax. What synod did say was, "We need to have more conversation," said Hiltz, adding, "That's an action."

The report on sexual discernment, finalized after discussions by members, acknowledges "diverse pastoral practices as dioceses respond to their own missional contexts." The report also acknowledged "the continuing commitment to develop generous pastoral responses" to gay and lesbian members of the church.

Asked whether he thought the international Anglican Communion would see General Synod's decision as evidence of "gracious restraint" that has been urged by some of its bodies, he said, "Some will and some won't."

Hiltz emphasized that members were challenged to "think about the world in which we live ... what we're doing to respond to the world's suffering." The issues that Anglicans in Canada think are so compelling "pale in comparison to issues that other people in the world face day to day," he said.—*Anglican Journal*. (The Anglican General Synod took place in Halifax at the same time as the PCC's General Assembly.)

## Same-Sex Malawian Couple Released

FOLLOWING PUBLIC OUTCRY, Malawi's president released a gay Malawian couple who had been sentenced to 14 years in prison after becoming engaged in the southern African country.

Same-sex relationships are a crime in Malawi, and in 36 other African countries. President Bingu wa Mutharika reminded the country of that fact. "These boys committed a crime against our culture, against our religion, and against our laws," he said, as reported in the *Toronto Star*. "However, as head of state, I hereby pardon them."

Rev. Levi Nyondo, general secretary of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia Synod, previously told *Ecumenical News International* that the church was "happy" the men had been sentenced to jail.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has close ties to Malawi's Presbyterian Church.  
—*ENI and Toronto Star* ■

# Money, Chocolate and Nudity

BY BRADLEY CHILDS

## SLAVE-FREE CHOCOLATE?

It is a sad note, but most of the chocolate around the world has a very close relationship with child slavery. In fact, the industry is so engulfed in slavery that while attempting to create a completely fair trade chocolate bar, Dutch chocolate makers Tony's Chocolonely Company still could not call their bars completely slavery-free. For now their slogan is, "On our way to 100 per cent slave-free chocolate." So I must ask: Next Easter, how should we celebrate the risen Christ with our children?

**FIND IT @** [www.chocolonely.nl](http://www.chocolonely.nl) and [divinechocolateusa.com](http://divinechocolateusa.com)

## Quote

"Last week I told my psychiatrist I keep thinking about suicide. He told me from now on I have to pay in advance." —*Rodney Dangerfield*

## BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

**Isaiah 20:2-3**—God has the prophet Isaiah walk around naked for three years. "The Lord told Isaiah, son of Amoz, 'Take off the burlap you have been wearing, and remove your sandals.' Isaiah did as he was told and walked around naked and barefoot. Then the Lord said, 'My servant, Isaiah has been walking around naked and barefoot for the last three years. This is a sign—a symbol of the terrible troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia.'"

## PASS THE DEBIT MACHINE

It's a changing world. It's a technology-based world. In fact, I can't remember the last time I read a hard copy of a newspaper let alone paid for a meal with cash. And does anyone still write cheques? More to the point, I've just recently heard someone say that the only cheque she writes each month is the one she writes to the church. And that is the logic behind putting ATMs in the church lobby and passing portable debit machines instead of an offering plate. So I ask you, is it offering or offense?

**FIND IT @** Search [ChristianWeek.org](http://ChristianWeek.org) for: "Praise the Lord and enter your PIN" and search [Time.com](http://Time.com) for: "The ATM in the Church Lobby"

## WEBSITE/BOOK

*Stuff Christians Like* by world famous Internet blogger Jonathan Acuff is the stuff of legends. First a website and now a book! Acuff's articles, like, "The Youth Minister's Unwritten Uniform" and "Throwing Away the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition" and "Rule 187: Leave Room for the Holy Spirit When You Dance" are some of the funniest things I've ever read. I can't wait to read the new book. And, really, who doesn't love Christian satire?

**FIND IT @** [stuffchristianslike.net](http://stuffchristianslike.net) and [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca) ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*



## Letter from India

# Together, We Save

SELF-HELP GROUPS HELP WOMEN IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. BY GUY SMAGGHE

KUPPAMMA stands up from among the crowd of 300 women gathered in a small hall rented for the occasion. She makes her way to the microphone and waits with excitement for her turn to share how her life has turned around since joining a small business self-help group six months ago. The women are all members of self-help groups supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development partner, Roofs for the Roofless, and have gathered to share their experiences and inspire one another about what can be accomplished when they work together to save money.

In the past, whenever Kuppamma

needed money she had to borrow from a local money lender who charged exorbitant interest rates. Her husband works as a daily labourer for \$2 a day, and is never assured to have work or earn enough for the family to make

## One by one, women share about their growing businesses

ends meet. Under these circumstances, many poor families in India struggle to send their children to school, and often borrow from money lenders who charge extremely high interest rates—even as much as 10 per cent per day! Many literally become enslaved to the money lenders with no hope of freedom from their debts.

Kuppamma found a fairer source of credit when she joined Roofs' Navaratnam self-help group.

Self-help groups in India give women confidence, connections and a voice in their communities.



With little extra income to spare, most of the group members started saving just 50 rupees per month (about \$1). After six months of saving together, the local bank authorized a loan of 170,000 rupees (\$4,000) for the group. Kuppamma received 9,500 rupees (\$225) as her share and invested in her small business to sell papad, a crispy flatbread. With her earnings of 1,000 rupees (\$25) per month, Kuppamma is able to send her three children to school and still have extra income to invest elsewhere.

In an effort to help women break free from the bonds of debt to money lenders, PWS&D's partners occasionally offer to pay their loans in exchange for the women repaying the partners with zero interest. Soon enough, the self-help groups are able to save enough together to render the money lenders' services obsolete and the money lenders have to find business elsewhere. The women are able to invest their earnings in their families, businesses and communities, taking control of their futures to create lasting change.

The line at the microphone just keeps growing. In the last few months, women in self-help groups received training in literacy, basic accounting, small business management, and how to run their group meetings. As they learn about their rights, they become agents of change for their communities and take a much stronger place in society. They have successfully become entrepreneurs, leaders and an inspiration to many around them, and I am proud to witness that transformation. ■

Guy Smagghe is the senior program coordinator for PWS&D. He can be reached at [gsmagghe@presbyterian.ca](mailto:gsmagghe@presbyterian.ca).



# World Does Not Want Divided Church

SCOTLAND should look forward to a better world and a united church when it celebrates the 500th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation in 50 years' time, the new moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rev. John Christie has said.

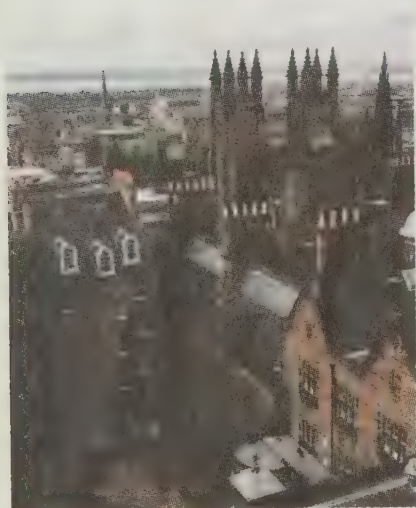
"If you think this is dreaming an impossible dream then let me say this, the Scottish Reformation began with John Knox in Perth and it circled the globe," said Christie. He spoke at a service in Edinburgh in May attended by more than 1,200 people to mark the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation in 1560.

Knox was one of the 16th century founders of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland having worked alongside Reformation leader Jean Calvin in Geneva.

He noted, "The world of 2010 does not need or want a divided church; divided within itself it cannot stand. It is time for the 21st century church to affirm that which unites us." Christie referred to the "blinker eye of tradition or the earplugs of sectarianism" which prevented Christians from being one.

The May 23 service came three days before the end of the 2010 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

■—ENI



Aerial view of Edinburgh, Scotland



## Brighter Futures for Children in India

PWS&D is working with partners in India to help vulnerable children get back into the classroom and access the support they need to excel. Through programs that improve schools, train teachers, offer after-school support and establish youth groups, young lives are changing and new opportunities are emerging. Together we can help the next generation live with hope for the future. Please support PWS&D today.



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# A Good Neighbour

BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY IN MALAWI. BY ED HOEKSTRA

BEING WHITE IN MALAWI definitely has its advantages. For example, at St. Columba, the congregation I serve in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, I look out on a seated congregation of about 1,000 and can easily find my wife, Jackie and my boys, Jacob and Nico.

And last year, when the church was celebrating the 150th anniversary of Dr. David Livingstone coming to Malawi, I was chosen to play the good doctor. Livingstone was instrumental in abolishing slavery and bringing Christianity and commerce to Malawi. The Livingstonia synod (where the Presbyterian Church in Canada also has a partnership) was named after him. He was an amazing Christian man, obedient to his calling. I felt honoured to recreate this character, even though my skin colour, gender and age had much to do with being chosen.

As *azungu* (white people), Jackie and I are frequently asked “for a little something.” The adults do not usually ask for money, but it is understood. Linda Inglis (a Presbyterian missionary friend) gave us the idea to give little packages of peanuts; this way you know they

are benefiting from the gift. However, Linda’s brilliant idea only goes so far: two weeks ago a man asked for something and I promptly reached into my glove compartment and handed him a bag of peanuts. He responded with a wide, gummy smile, stating he did not have any teeth!

## Christian friendship then takes over and the colour of my skin becomes secondary

But making connections within the community has to go beyond the stereotypical associations that come with being white in a foreign land.

The inmates at Chichiri prison, where I minister when I’m not in the congregation, love it when I try to speak Chichewa. Some of them like it so much that they promise not to revert to English. In my attempt to speak their mother tongue, the inmates feel that I care for them and want to get to know them. Christian friendship then takes

over and the colour of my skin becomes secondary to my identity with them.

It is understandable that as a white person, I will always represent wealth to the average Malawian. No one likes to be viewed as an object. However, I do believe (and have experienced) that in our actions, we can show our brothers and sisters in Malawi that we represent far more than aid money. St. Columba is a huge congregation divided into 14 cottages, or districts. Each district takes their turn to visit our home on the last Sunday of each month to worship with us and bring gifts of food. This is a beautiful tradition where they take time and share their resources to make sure the pastor is well cared for. Without exception, each cottage articulates that they are thankful that we willingly left our home and our country to be with them. We are appreciated! And we appreciate their gratitude immensely.

Over 20 years ago, Jackie and I were thinking of moving to a new city, so we decided to look at some homes to buy. The real estate agent was a wise, thoughtful woman. After looking at several places, we narrowed it down to one. Before we put in the offer, I asked her if she knew whether the neighbours we would inherit were good neighbours. The agent’s reply was simple and succinct: “If you are a good neighbour, you will probably have good neighbours.”

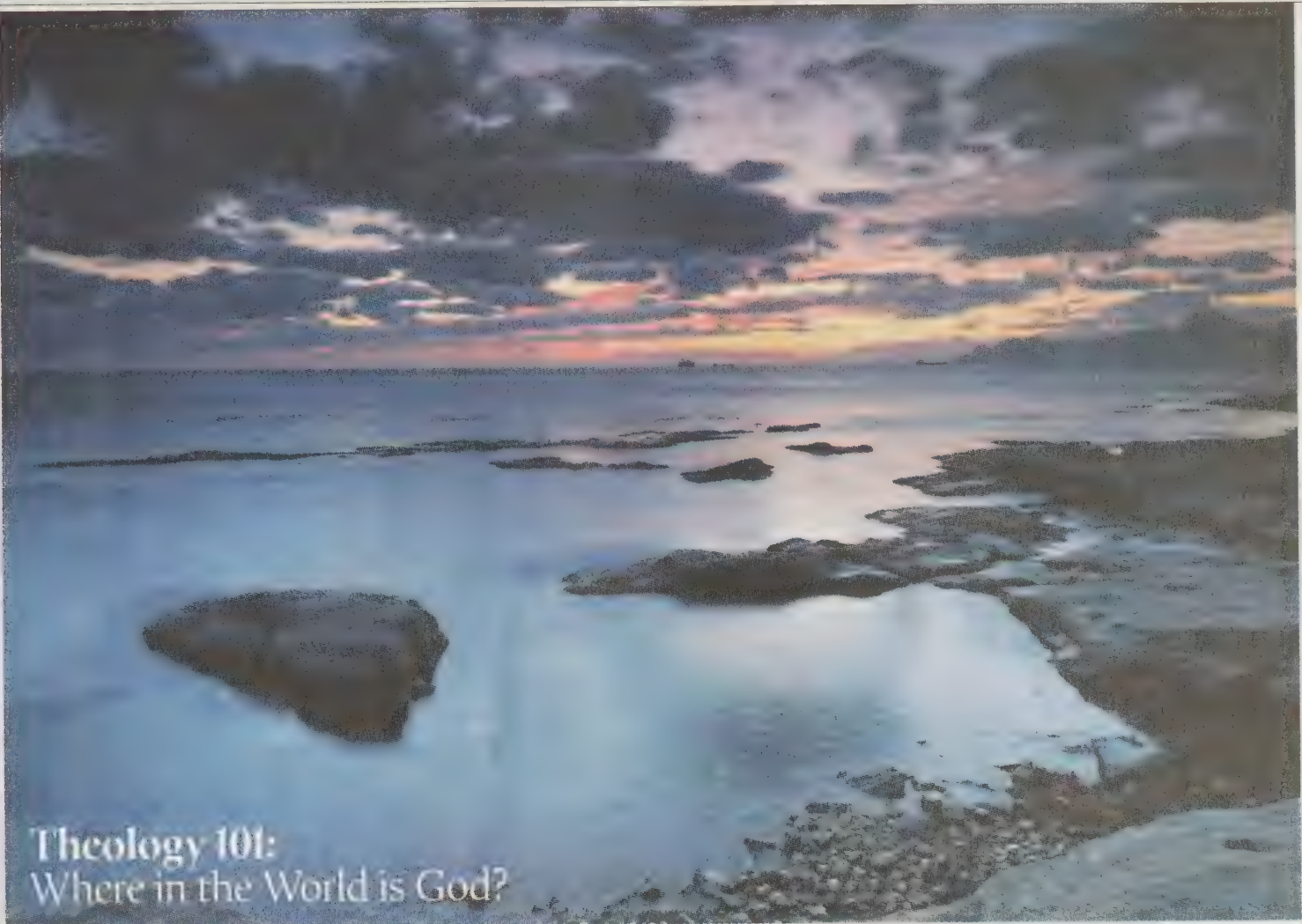
The parable of the Good Samaritan answers the Pharisee’s question: “Who is my neighbour?” It is not easy to “Go and do likewise,” but we do it because it is the way of Jesus—the way that brings understanding and unity to both neighbours. ■

*Rev. Ed Hoekstra is the associate minister at St. Columba, Malawi, and a chaplain at Chichiri Prison in Blantyre. He has been serving in Malawi since 2008.*



Ed Hoekstra dressed as Dr. David Livingstone at the anniversary of Livingstone's arrival in Malawi.





Theology 101:  
Where in the World is God?

## The Wonder of It All

GOD IN CREATION. BY NANCY COCKS

**PICTURE** yourself outdoors, in a place that takes your breath away. What are you picturing? Impressive mountain peaks glistening with snow? A misty rainforest with ancient trees so tall you can't see the sky? Perhaps it's an expanse of ocean or sparkling stars which draws you into wonder. Different scenes from what John Calvin called "the theatre" of God's glory can stop any one of us in our tracks, caught up in awe as we witness grandeur so much greater than our own small lives.

Such wonder at the world around us and the worlds beyond us finds its voice in the Psalms. As someone who fancies the night sky, I resonate with the words from Psalm 8: "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them?" Marvelling at both the fragile and forceful details of nature, we feel the pulse to cry out to the source of life in all its forms, for we recognize that only some power greater than our

own could bring the astounding world around us to birth. The ancient poetry in Hebrew scripture teaches us to address the Source of all that is as our Creator, God, the "Lord" of all that ►

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As you picture yourself in your favourite scene in God's "theatre," ask yourself, "Where do I sense God to be at this moment?"

is. For when we witness the beauty and expanse in our cherished places, often we express our praise. "Wow!" is its own small prayer of appreciation when we are struck by God's glory.

As you picture yourself in your favourite scene in God's "theatre," ask yourself, "Where do I sense God to be at this moment?" Is God up there, somewhere beyond what you see? Or is God so close you might breathe in God's presence? Theologians and philosophers have debated the questions of God's transcendence and God's immanence to creation for centuries. For some, God is utterly transcendent, poised at a great distance from creation. God may be

deemed so holy and distinct from the mere stuff of life that God must occupy a place of purity which can barely be described on the lips of mortals. Or else God is pictured as rather detached, like a watchmaker, who sets the gears of the world in motion and then leaves things to run on their own. Yet for others, God is perceived as immanent, intimately involved with creation, virtually imbedded in the processes of nature, of life itself. Over the centuries, the tension and possibility in these divergent frameworks have found expression in the hymns of the church. Just take a look at the hymns in the *Book of Praise* in the section, God Creator and Ruler. Pay attention to how near and how far God is pictured in relation to creation.

The wisdom in centuries of Christian tradition is to hold God's transcendence and immanence in creative paradox—two truths held in faithful tension rather than competing views between which we must choose. Respect for God's transcendence acknowledges God is not captive within creation and somehow subject to our manipulation. Appreciating God's immanence to each and every aspect of creation reminds us to live in right relationship with the whole of creation—not just humankind. In this generation, we are suddenly aware of the impact human beings have on the interdependence between so many species and habitats. If we recognize God's love present in and for the world in all its complexity, then surely our discipleship must include a deepening commitment to live in creative rather than destructive relationship with all that God loves.

The impact of human lifestyles on the fabric of creation was not a topic that concerned the storytellers of scripture. However, in our generation, we may infer from their wonder at the marvels of God's handiwork and their humility before the immensity of the world a stance of appreciation and respect not just for human beings as God's creatures but also the other dimensions of creation which live and thrive in relationship to God. These days, attention sometimes

turns to Celtic Christian tradition to find expressions of this appreciation. In the texts of Celtic prayer, we hear the blessing of God offered through the powers in nature: "Deep peace of the running wave to you; deep peace of the shining stars to you." What I find nourishing in this Celtic benediction is its instinct to find the completion of creation in Christ: "Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you." A verse within the familiar Celtic prayer known as St. Patrick's Breastplate offers a wonderful expression of God's transcendence and immanence in Christ. (*Book of Praise* #576) Set after stanzas that wonder at God's power expressed in nature's fierce beauty, we find this confession:

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ  
in hearts of all that love me, Christ in  
mouth of friend and stranger.*

Celtic Christian prayer knows Christ immanent and transcendent at the heart of God's creative love. It is an expression of what the letter to the Colossians suggests when it speaks of Christ as "the firstborn of all creation...He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:15,17) The world, the cosmos God loves, is held together in Christ's creative and redeeming power. So the next time you are enjoying your favourite place, breathing in the wonder of God's creation, why not repeat the verse from St. Patrick's Breastplate? Let God's love in Christ embrace you—and the world around you—and call you to a life that honours God's creation in all its diversity, which is beloved to God, its Source. ■

*A former professor, Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks is minister at St. John's, Medicine Hat, Alta. She has served on ecumenical environmental task groups on behalf of the Presbyterian Church.*



# Bent Over. Set Free!

WHEN JESUS SPEAKS SABBATH, AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE



August 22, 2010 reading

13th Sunday after Pentecost  
Luke 13:10-17

One Sabbath as Jesus preached, he saw a sermon illustration, right there in the synagogue! What if, in the middle of the assembly of the righteous men, a cursed, deformed person appeared? What if that person were a woman?

How did she get there? We learn not to see the bent-over people in our midst!

Jesus called her to stand up as best she could. She walked up the aisle to where he sat in the teacher's chair.

In front of the congregation, Jesus touched someone contaminated by infirmity. He touched a woman.

What did she say when she stood up straight and praised God? Did she look up, with a great big grin across her face? Did she sprint down the aisle, out into the world, to tell everyone what God had done for her? Let's imagine all of that.

The synagogue president (the clerk of session) was angry. Jesus broke the Sabbath. Her condition wasn't life-

threatening. Jesus could have waited until after dark, or the next morning. After 18 years, what was one more day?

She never asked to be healed. She didn't come right up to Jesus. He found her. In his presence, with the word of God hanging in the air, release from bondage was bound to happen! Healing flowed like the water a faithful man would provide for his stock before he went to morning service.

Luke describes what happened to the woman with words that depict the ox and the goat, led out of their stalls to life-giving water. Sabbath is about restoring life and meeting ➤



## Every call to worship is an invitation to enter the fullness of the Sabbath. In fact, every new day is a call to live the Sabbath. To live in grace. Every day

real needs. Sabbath is about healing and liberation.

What if, in the middle of a sermon, somebody turns up, somebody whose life is all about what the preacher is talking about? What if somebody who's bent double by the very burdens scripture and sermon say can be taken away, suddenly appears?

What if, when the minister prays for the healing of all the sick, a woman who sits in the shadows suddenly discovers she has been healed?

What if, when the congregation prays, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done ..." the kingdom actually comes?

Any of these events would lead us

into new territory. Really, old, well-mapped territory. Jesus didn't do much that was new, but everything was made new because he was there.

Every call to worship is an invitation to enter the fullness of the Sabbath. In fact, every new day is a call to live the Sabbath. To live in grace. Every day.

To rest from all our efforts to save ourselves. To glorify God. To enjoy living the life God gives us. To accept the gifts God pours out on us. Release from bondage, the freedom of the children of God.

To stand up straight, and praise God. To proclaim liberty, and to get to work unbending all that is crooked. Lifting up those who are bent-over by burdens no one need bear.

When Nova Scotians hear this story, we think of our most famous bent-over woman, Maud Lewis. Maud was never healed in her body. Only death released her from her

pain, her poverty, and her husband Everett's cruelty.

When she took a paintbrush in her twisted hand, and opened her jars of brilliant, glossy paint, her spirit was free. It took such effort to look up, to see just a little of the world around her. When she looked down, and touched her brush to whatever she could find to paint on, she saw a world overflowing with delight. Delight in the simple things you and I miss, because we see so much.

We might wonder, "What if Maud had been healed, whole, and free?" We look at her pictures. Their bright beauty speaks Sabbath to us. Can we say she wasn't whole? She wasn't free?

What if we spoke Sabbath to all the bent-over people in our midst? ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.*

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# Reviews



## Global Christianity

WHILE THE CHURCH IS STRUGGLING IN THE NORTH, IT IS FLOURISHING IN THE SOUTH. **BY IAN VICTOR**  
ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE THOMPSON

### Books Reviewed

GLOBAL CONSCIENCE  
by Douglas Roche

GOD'S CONTINENT—  
CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM AND  
EUROPE'S RELIGIOUS CRISIS  
by Philip Jenkins

THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM—  
THE COMING OF GLOBAL  
CHRISTIANITY  
by Philip Jenkins

*“WHERE* in the world are we heading?” is a question dogging the best and worst of minds these days. Canadian Presbyterians, among others, anxiously visit palliative care wards to comfort our dying friends, Impact and Importance, all the while hoping that we can nurse our shaky Passion for Mission back to health. While there are a great many signs of life in our denomination, there are many situations that are moribund and desperate. Mostly I find that we are, at heart,

puzzled. Those who remain among us find our worship and community life so good and helpful that we wonder why others aren't busting down our doors, and sense at heart that the little tweaks we make to be more attractive are missing the boat. Where We Are Heading is the subject at the core of the three books under consideration, all of which look to a global and inter-religious perspective, and all of which offer challenges and options for any church body. ➤



**GLOBAL CONSCIENCE** by former senator Douglas Roche outlines some of the signs of hope that he sees repeatedly as growing grassroots commitments to a new way of being in the world. Seen across cultural, religious and political boundaries is the growing realization that the world simply can no longer sustain its vast inequities, environmental degradation and futile militarism, whose chief expense and danger is the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons.

Roche catalogues his signs of hope passionately and persuasively, seeing, for example, the international acceptance of the concept of human security (legitimizing outside intervention when governments work genocide against their own people) as a seed-change from the belief that internal matters were not subject to external correction. An examination of the facts of war and peace surprisingly indicates that arms trading and armed conflicts are on the decline, while peaceful resolution of disputes and rapid intervention in military crises are on the rise. We know little of this because these stories rarely make our news. So the author cites concrete examples of a growing global conscience; in cogent vignettes of non-governmental organizations which incarnate new ways of collaborative thinking, and in hope-filled programs on peace, justice and human security that are created and serve collaboratively, beyond tribe, race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. Whenever people grasp their common responsibility for the good of all, and face their own responsibility in hardening attitudes and gross injustices that lead to conflict and war, the global conscience is active and growing.

As an experienced politician and diplomat and from his perspective as a devout Christian, Roche believes churches must move beyond their "excess interiority" which can so focus on a relationship with God while ignoring human need and Christ's call to love our neighbours as ourselves.

**PHILIP JENKINS'** interest is as contemporary as Roche's, but his focus and analysis—in *God's Continent:*

*Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*—address the question of peace between religions, including the religion of the secular state, and the role of faith groups in society.

In 2000, there were approximately 10 million Muslims in Europe, with the largest number (four million) in France; a number which has no doubt grown exponentially since. While elements of racism and xenophobia lie behind many of the resulting social conflicts, Jenkins points out that in large measure, Europe's difficulty in accommodating this wave of immigration lies less in the particulars of Islamic thought than it does in the conflict between any religious world view with a dominant culture that is officially self-defined as secular. (Witness France's ban on religious symbols in schools, whether they be crescent moons, burkhas or crucifixes.) Given the moribund nature of most of the established churches of the continent, the triumph of secularism seemed almost assured, until immigration brought cultural and religious challenges to this accepted norm.

Two curious results are that Muslims and Christians often find themselves as allies against the state's demands for secularity and liberalism; and the Christian memory of Europe is starting to stir among many who long ago abandoned any practice of faith but now find themselves wondering just whence their threatened values arose in the first place.

At the same time, Christian immigration to Europe is rising, but the new Christians bear a strikingly different face (more on this below) in their view of tradition, theology, ethics and social expectations. Here, as in Islam, a profound challenge exists to separate what is faith from what is culture, and for many the question itself seems irrelevant. If all life is to be lived before God, should not the state either submit to God's will or face being ignored or actively opposed by the faithful? Some Islamic communities have successfully fought for civil rights and a societal respect that has long been lost to

the Christians. Jenkins notes the irony that, since the controversy over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and the outrage that followed the Danish publication of the Muhammad cartoons, European media tend to be rigorously self-censoring in their attempts not to offend the religious sensibilities of Muslims (or Jews for that matter), but Christians and scurrilous depictions of Jesus remain open game.

Jenkins in this encyclopedic and well-researched book does not see the Islamicization of Europe as inevitable, or the death of its Christianity. He notes, "The advent of Islam might also be good news for European Christianity ... As European states redefine their attitudes to one religion, they have no choice but to take account of the far more numerous presence of Christianity. From a grassroots level too, the immense attention paid to religious concerns and Europe's heritage in the last few years probably will drive more Europeans to take a renewed interest in their Christian roots ... death and resurrection are not just fundamental doctrines of Christianity; they represent a historical model of the religion's structure and development."

**IN THE NEXT CHRISTENDOM—***The Coming of Global Christianity*, which predates and informs his work on Europe, Jenkins presents us with statistics and research that demonstrate clearly that the face of Christian faith is profoundly changing. Today's Christianity stands in a nearly reciprocal relationship with global economics; while financial and economic strength lie primarily in the northern hemisphere, Christians in our day are, by a great majority, southern, non-white and poor. While we struggle to maintain congregations and meet budgets, church growth in Africa, Asia and Latin America is soaring. While many new Christians are responding to and coming under the wing of traditional mission churches, the majority are gathered in independent and neo-Pentecostal fellowships, usually led by a series of charismatic figures who claim direct experience of God and ►



gifts of the Spirit that match those of the first apostles. That difference alone is the source of some rivalry and conflict between these emerging churches as issues of authority and territory are hashed out between them, as well as between them and other faiths and governments. Problems in Nigeria and India may be among the best known, but they are far from unique.

Many Christians are under violent threat from rival religions and hostile governments, and a martyr's death or imprisonment is not something to be read about and pondered in history books or in the Book of Acts—it is a part of daily experience. Jesus' teachings on responses to suffering and expulsion, the apostle's experiences in spreading the gospel, and the Book of Revelation's psychedelic visions are living realities for many. So it's not too surprising, given that kind of direct experience, that a literalistic view of the Bible is prominent.

Nor is it surprising that we are being taught more about our beginnings as a faith for the outcast, downtrodden and despised. "Consider your calling," St. Paul wrote, "not many of you were of noble birth ..." Our first fathers and mothers in faith were like Isaiah's suffering servant, despised and rejected, people of sorrows acquainted with grief. The southern church has much to teach us of our Saviour's presence among the poor. Jenkins writes, "African and Latin American Christians are people for whom the New Testament Beatitudes have a direct relevance inconceivable for most Christians in northern societies. When Jesus told "the poor" they were blessed, the word used does not imply relative deprivation, it means total poverty, or destitution. The great majority of Christians in the global south (and increasingly, of all Christians) really are the poor, the hungry, the persecuted, even the dehumanized. India has a perfect translation for Jesus's word in the term Dalit, literally "crushed" or "oppressed." This is how the country's so-called Untouchables now choose to describe themselves; as we might translate the Biblical phrase, "blessed are the

untouchables."

For us Canadian Presbyterians, all three of these books offer ways into the future that call for a profound recasting of much of our focus. We've long since realized that many of our old ways have to go, if for no other reason than we are failing in large part to connect with the deep spiritual hunger of our times. Douglas Roche's work implies a call to less interiority and to a greater partnership with all who are working for God's peace and justice; to bolster the hope of the world for a better, fairer future, not least by seeking resolutely to find and exploit whatever common ground we share with others of a different faith, or of no faith at all. As he states, "In the discord of the 21st century, it is already clear that there must be peace among religions if there is to be peace among nations. And there cannot be peace among religions without a genuine, respectful dialogue among religions and between religious and secular society."

Recent debates at assembly have demonstrated a great variety of opinion in our church about an appropriate stance for interfaith dialogues; gaining a hearing from others enamored of the secularism of our society is an even more difficult process. How do we re-encounter our "cultured despisers" (to use 19th-century German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher's term)? Shall we begin by clearly understanding our marginal position, sloughing off our unhelpful cultural accretions, and focusing on what we have to offer to the world and to the church? And are we willing to embrace creatively the suffering and marginalization that will be our lot regardless?

Philip Jenkins' studies open our eyes to see the problems and possibilities inherent in Christian and Muslim growth in other lands coming home to roost with us through the fluidity of popu-

## For us Canadian Presbyterians, all three of these books offer ways into the future that call for a profound recasting of much of our focus

lations in our day. There is a profound theological challenge underlying these rapid changes. What will our Christianity look like when it encounters a new majority of brothers and sisters whose understanding of family, sexuality, government, ecclesiology and even learning is so different from what we are used to? What part will we play, if indeed God in God's grace casts us in a role in this drama? How much flexibility do we allow in our own theology without losing the core of who and whose we are?

One thing is clear. As Jenkins writes, "The distribution of modern Christians might well show that the religion does succeed best when it takes very seriously the profound pessimism about the secular world that characterizes the New Testament. If it is not exactly a faith based on the experience of poverty and persecution, than at least it regards these things as normal and expected elements of life. That view is not derived from complex theological reasoning but is rather a lesson drawn from lived experience. Christianity certainly can succeed in other settings, even amid peace and prosperity, but perhaps it does become harder, as hard as passing through the eye of a needle." ■

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*Rev. Dr. Ian Victor is lead minister at St. Andrew's, Victoria, B.C., and recently received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*



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# A Thoughtful New Resource

"HEAR OUR PRAYERS." BY CLYDE ERVINE

**Book Reviewed**
**COMMON ORDER: A CANADIAN  
BOOK OF SERVICES OF WORSHIP**

Compiled and edited

by Ian S. Wishart

**PRESBYTERIAN** worship often oscillates between those seeking the liturgical precision of written prayers and prescribed texts, and those who like their worship free of set forms. This tension goes back at least to the 1633 fury of a Scot named Jenny Geddes, who threw a stool at the minister of St. Giles' Church, Edinburgh, as he attempted to read from, and impose on the Church of Scotland, a prescribed liturgy inspired by the Church of England! Presbyterian prejudice against written prayers has had a long history; only late in the 19th century did Presbyterian clergy think it legitimate to use printed prayers written by others in public worship. The Presbyterian Church in Canada first published a *Book of Common Order* in 1922; a second followed in 1938, another in 1964, and the current *Book of Common Worship* in 1991. This collection by Rev. Ian S. Wishart of St. John's, Nfld., stands in this liturgical tradition. But will his thoughtful new resource be used as widely as it ought?

Though our denomination encourages the use of prepared prayers and set worship forms, we adopted our various books of Common Order, not as prescribed canonical forms that must be used, but as helpful resources that can be used; Presbyterians enjoy significant liturgical freedom. This freedom leads, however, to a good

deal of congregational worship that still oscillates between a stultifying use of printed resources on the one hand, and a makeshift liturgical incoherence on the other. Some worship leaders are convinced that the Holy Spirit inspires extemporaneous prayers, but is only distantly related to written prayers. Others have become such slaves to the verbatim reading of generic printed prayers that worship gets stuck in a dry liturgical rut. We need help to

Wishart's *Common Order* will help us. What he offers is the fruit of his liturgical labours and worship practice over a lifetime of ministry

avoid the laziness apparent in both "we jis wanna" and "we beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst" prayers.

Wishart's *Common Order* will help us. What he offers is the fruit of his liturgical labours and worship practice over a lifetime of ministry. It is a conservative book, both in the sense that he seeks to conserve prayers from the church catholic that might be otherwise lost, but also in the sense that he is a traditionalist rather than an innovator. As an example of the former, I think of his inclusion of the wonderful 17th prayer of St. Dimitri of Rostov:

*Come, my Light,  
and illumine my darkness.  
Come, my Life,  
and revive me from death.  
Come, my Physician,  
and heal my wounds,*



*Come, Flame of divine love,  
and burn up the thorns of my sins,  
kindling my heart  
with the flame of your love.  
Come, my King,  
rule the throne of my heart,  
For you alone are my King  
and my Lord.*

As to Wishart's traditionalism, his language occasionally sounds dated to me: "We do not deserve your benefits, yet we beseech you to confirm your favour to us," or, in the Order for the Confirmation of Baptized Persons, the candidates are welcomed as those who have been "trained and taught in the things pertaining to Christ and his Church."

That said, we ought to note that his intention is not that his texts be slavishly read, but that they be used to stimulate further reflection on prayer. Mind you, many of the texts included are immediately useable. I think of many

of his own regular Sunday prayers, or of the Advent prayers of Ruth Houtby, or a fine prayer adapted from the 17th-century bishop, Jeremy Taylor:

*O God: your mercies are more  
than we can number.  
Make us, we pray, sensible of  
the shortness and uncertainty  
of human life; may your  
Holy Spirit lead us in holiness  
and righteousness all our days.  
When we shall have served you  
in our day and generation,  
receive us in your kingdom,  
with the testimony of  
a good conscience,  
in the communion of your church,  
in the confidence of Christian faith,  
in the comfort of your blessed hope,  
in charity with our neighbours,  
in favour with you our God.  
Grant this, we pray,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Some specifics: I like how Wishart introduces the prayers of intercession: "O God: you have committed to your people the privilege of prayer on behalf of your people. Hear our prayers for your church and your world." I like his Good Friday prayers. I like the fact that he has included the Communion Service from the PCC's 1922 *Book of Common Order*. Shortened, it can still offer a most complete liturgy.

We need to be reminded that God is a God of weight, and that when we worship God, our worship must also have weight. *Common Order* reminds us of this fact, even as it encourages us to confidently worship such a God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. ■

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*Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine is minister at  
Central, Hamilton, Ont.*

## TOGETHER WE DID!

Your generous contributions have made it possible to successfully finish the Together We Can! projects for the Jobat School Hostel and School Supplies for Eastern Europe. Construction is underway in India and funds have been sent to the schools in Eastern Europe.



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# Refreshed

SHELDON MACKENZIE'S MASTER SERIES CONTINUES. BY JONATHAN DENT

## Book Reviewed

THE MASTER MISSIONARIES:  
SERMONS FROM ACTS

By Rev. Dr. Roy Sheldon MacKenzie

**DR. MACKENZIE** has once again given the church and all individuals who love the scriptures a chance to look at them with fresh eyes. He brings his academic background in biblical studies and the joy of being a grandparent to his work. He weaves Old and New Testament contexts together in the Book of Acts as he applies the scriptures to the

21st century, comparing for example, Ananias and Sapphira with Achan. Of course, the strength of the work comes in his applications to living today.

As all good preachers do, he leads his listeners and readers back to the text to wrestle with the content found there. Whether he addresses the Ascension, Pentecost or Stephen's ministry, his approach invites us to wonder at how God started the church. Moments of humour lace the work, such as *The Evangelist Was Stoned!* He doesn't hesitate to bring his own experience to the table, nor to address controversial issues. He tells us how one student tried to in-

## He doesn't hesitate to bring his own experience to the table, nor to address controversial issues

roduce him to her experience of the gift of tongues. His style impacts the reader more like poetry than prose, and the print is arranged accordingly. While you may not agree with all his interpretations, you can certainly appreciate where he brings us. His destination is a greater appreciation for Luke who brings us his understanding of what God was doing in his time, the same God who wants to do much in our time. He validates the reality of the scriptures speaking to our times as much as they did to theirs.

MacKenzie underlines the clash of several cultures coming together in one place and the persecution of those who proclaim Christianity's positive relevance to today as major themes in Acts. We experience more and more the same in Canada when he delivered these sermons as well as today. As we listen to him, we are drawn back to the Spirit of God.

He has continued to publish his sermons in *The Master* series. All these help us to encounter the scriptures and the Lord of the church anew. Whether you read them in bits and pieces, or sit for a long while with the whole book, you will be refreshed. I trust this is as true in British Columbia as it is in Newfoundland, and everywhere in between. ■

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent is minister at St. David's, St. John's, Nfld.



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# Heavenly Humour

REVISITING THE MASTER. BY MINHO YOO

## Books Reviewed

- THE MASTER TEACHER: SERMONS FROM MARK
- THE MASTER PREACHER: SERMONS FROM JOHN
- THE MASTER STORYTELLER: SERMONS FROM LUKE

By Rev. Dr. Roy Sheldon MacKenzie

**WHAT CAN I DO** to prepare a sermon that will be well-remembered by the listeners? How can I make a balanced or consistent sermon, which is not draggy, nor a mosaic from the lectionary readings? How can I approach and preach four different gospel stories while preserving their own peculiar flavour? These are the questions and challenges I had in mind before reading Rev. Dr. Roy Sheldon MacKenzie's sermon collections.

We, as preachers, are uniquely made and have gone through different life journeys. As a result, it is difficult to say what is the correct formula to make a good sermon. I feel it is appropriate to read and rethink the works of a veteran preacher such as MacKenzie especially at a time when the pulpits are at risk and changes are necessary.

His sermons are not prose, but rather verse. His sermon sentences are simple, rhythmical and colloquial. The sermons trigger the senses and imagination of the listeners. For example, the sermon *A Visible Sign* on Mark 2:1-12: "Dust and dirt got into their eyes, so that they couldn't see. It got into their noses. They began to cough and sneeze. The noise of the falling earth and breaking wood drowned out the words of Jesus below. Within minutes the crowd was angry. The man of the house was beside himself. Get down off the roof! The hole just

got bigger. Suddenly, the large hole in the roof was darkened. Down through the hole came a stretcher. On the stretcher lay a frightened, paralyzed man. Little wonder if he was frightened. He had never been airborne before!" What picturesque story telling! The call of the preacher is as that of a tour guide when he or she guides a group into scenes where they have never been.

The most difficult process as a lectionary-based preacher is the job of "blending." The proper blending of each portion of the scriptures and producing one consistent message is a most challenging job for me. I agree with the metaphor that a sermon is like food. If it is tasty, then people will come again. If not, they will stop coming. As many cooks say, the blending of ingredients is the most essential part in the preparation. In that sense, there are many nuggets on which to chew in MacKenzie's sermons. Let us take a look into one titled, *Sorry, Not For Sale!* based on Acts 8:9-24—the conversion of Simon the sorcerer—and 2 Kings 4:8-37—Elisha and the Shunammite's son. From the two passages and two different characters such as greedy Ghazi, the confidante of the prophet Elisha in the Old Testament, and a power seeker, Simon, the sorcerer in the New Testament, the preacher blends two separate stories and heralds one prophetic message relevant with church mission today. "The story of Simon illustrates how easily false teaching may invade the church of Christ. It encourages vigilance on our part against the excess of fundamentalism, authoritarianism and sectarianism. At a time when the

His sermons are not prose, but rather verse. His sermon sentences are simple, rhythmical and colloquial. The sermons trigger the senses and imagination of the listeners.

church of Christ finds its message at odds with current political and social practice, we need the conviction and courage of Peter as he dealt with the first Christian heretic."

Finally, MacKenzie's sermon is experiential and is well-flavoured with humour. From his sermon, titled *Mistaken Identity* based on Mark 3:19-30, he tells his own story of how he was mistaken for the former President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. MacKenzie gave his autograph to an American tourist. One could use this idea in a sermon where Jesus would be mistaken for Moses or Elijah. MacKenzie's sermons have many humorous stories. I like to call them heavenly humour.

I am pleased to say that I learned much from his sermon collections. They reflect much of what I am preaching today. ■

*Rev. Minho Yoo is minister at Knox-Zion, Carberry, Man.*



# General Assembly 2010

JUNE 6-11,  
SYDNEY, CAPE BRETON

PHOTOS BY DAVID HARRIS AND ANDREW FAIZ

## Unable to Act

A REPORT FROM THE 136TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY. BY RUTH HOUTBY

**OPENING WORSHIP** of this year's assembly gave us the gift of the Cape Breton Orchestra. They played an arrangement of *Simple Gifts* as an offertory. I was moved by such a beautiful and yet simple piece of music and thought how the gifts we bring to God as a church are simple and sure. Would the business of the assembly be so simple and sure?

Perhaps the richest gifts, the most moving gifts, are those that come to us through the tangible mission of the church. I was so moved that tears escaped as I watched the wonderful and diverse faces that appeared on the screen thanks to a PWS&D video highlighting the work that is carried out in our name and on our behalf all over the world. Those images serve to ground me and remind me of our connectedness. Those images are simple and sure.

The fact that PWS&D managed to appeal to the wider church this

year and cover their shortfall and then some, is an uplifting and inspiring statement of faith from the wider church and of its tremendous support.

I wonder then, why it is we find ourselves in such a bind when it comes to funding regional staff? The shortfall is a mere \$190,000. This seems like such a small amount when compared to the \$1.5 million raised as people stepped up to the plate to ensure that the work of PWS&D would not falter. Where is the same generosity for such an important part of our church's structure? Our regional staff are an integral part of the PCC. It was very clear from the number of overtures submitted and the lengthy debate on the floor of assembly that we want to find a solution to this latest funding shortfall. Is there more to this debate than what we were presented with at assembly? What are

our priorities as a national church?

Our moderator led us into a theme of generosity and giving. His focus this year will be on exactly that, and how we can grow our generosity and sail forward into the future by practicing that generosity. I am wondering how that will surface as this need for additional funding will be an ongoing issue before the church.

Both the passion and the frustration of the church was evident throughout the debate around this issue as well as several others. At times bogged down in the finite, at times bogged down in the trivial, we get caught almost to the point of being unable to act.

As a church we are caught in an unknown and undiscovered time in our history where we all struggle to find our way forward—to grow the church forward. What this looks like is often unclear and so we struggle





Commissioners; new *Record* board member Kathleen Bolton and Rev. Dr. Roberta Clare of St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology; Rev. Job van Hartingsveldt.

and that can show in loss and frustration which were evident throughout some of the debates.

The issue about lay missionaries being able to administer the sacrament of Communion has been before the court in various forms for many years and yet we still debate its merit and whether or not it's "Presbyterian." We claim that our strength is in not making hasty decisions but are there consequences to delaying decisions that might move the church forward in ways perhaps not yet imagined? We are a church in decline, of that there is no doubt. We are searching for a way forward and yet we seem so reluctant to take any great leaps of faith without analysis and study and process that might just kill the initiative.

Is our vision so limited? Are we so fraught with worry and control that we are unable to act? What are we trying to preserve? When do we let the Holy Spirit set a new course? Do we allow the movement of the Spirit among us at assembly? Everything is so scripted and processed. Is

this stifling the Spirit under our layers and layers of control and process? We might just discover new things if we allow for that movement. As the young adult representatives reminded us—we have rules for everything!

When will we allow the wind to change our direction and sail this ship on a new course? As one of our worship leaders stated, "Are we in God's way as barriers or with God waiting to be guided and make the changes necessary?" There were moments during the debate and subsequent process that I was not always certain.

I know our strength lies in our polity and we have good and orderly debate and we follow due process, but there is also frustration which can turn to complacency when nothing seems to move forward and it will take yet another year before there is any movement on a given issue.

I, like so many others, love this church in which I was born and raised, and I really don't want to see it wither and fade away. Being Presbyterian is in my blood but so is a passion and de-

sire to see radical new ways of being church and for a radical new vision for ministry. I'm not sure what that looks like. I don't think I saw it at assembly.

I felt it now and then trying to gurgel up in some ways on the floor of assembly. Motions to be bold and plant 10 new churches in the next five years. What have we got to lose? Maybe we'll only plant seven or eight, but maybe it will spring to life and we might just plant more! And yet there was great hesitation in committing—yes the word here is committing—the church to this action. The motions get watered down with words like encourage, suggest and invite and the frustration level rises.

If we're on a boat called *Generosity* this year, we'd better know that we need a big tugboat full of faith! I don't think God cares so much about how "Presbyterian" we are, but God does care about our faithfulness. ■

*Rev. Ruth Houtby is minister at St. Giles, Ottawa.*



# Business News

MORE COMMITTEES, MORE STUDIES, MORE STATUS QUO. BY CONNIE PURVIS AND AMY MACLACHLAN

## **Living Faith in Korean**

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY endorsed the Korean translation of *Living Faith*, commending it for use within the church.

"You are seeing the changing face of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and we rejoice in that diversity," said Moderator Herb Gale.

The Korean *Living Faith* joins its French counterpart, *Foi Vivante*, as the second non-English version of the subordinate standard to be created and commended for use in Presbyterian churches.

## **Committee to Explore Han-Ca Presbyteries**

A SPECIAL COMMITTEE was struck to study the life of the Han-Ca presbyteries, consisting of two members from the two presbyteries, and three members from the church at large.

The 2002 assembly ended the trial period for the church's Korean presbyteries, but recommended striking such a committee in 2010 to review the 2002 report, and to survey both Han-Ca and non Han-Ca presbyteries about how they have addressed concerns raised in the report. The committee will bring their findings to the 2012 assembly.

The committee's scope enlarged with two amendments proposed by Rev. Peter Bush, commissioner from the Presbytery of Winnipeg, and approved by assembly. The consultations will include presbyteries that contain Han-Ca churches within their geographical boundaries. The

committee will also explore how congregations within Han-Ca presbyteries might transfer to geographic presbyteries, and how congregations in geographic presbyteries might transfer to the non-geographic Han-Ca presbyteries.

The vote was a close one, with Han-Ca members arguing that their presbyteries should be able to discuss such details on their own, without the influence of other presbyteries, and that such discussions could prove divisive within the Han-Ca presbyteries.

## **Presbyteries Urged to Plant Churches and New Ministries**

IN WHAT BECAME a highly debated motion, Rev. Peter Bush asked the assembly to urge all presbyteries to "be bold in taking risks in seeking the advance of the reign of God" and, more specifically, asked the Presbyterian Church to "commit itself to the vision of planting 10 congregations each year over the five years," from 2012 until 2016.

The assembly voted to split the motion into two, endorsing the call to be bold in taking risks, but debating the church-planting clause.

Bush defended his motion's 10-per-year figure, comparing setting a numerical goal with setting a wedding date; he suggested it was more likely to happen if there was a clear goal ahead. He emphasized that such planting did not need to be done in "traditional ways," but could be done in "new and innovative ways" which may not need a lot of

money to begin, and which can reflect new forms of ministry and new definitions of "church."

"We have to focus on the dream, not the outcome," argued Rev. Derek Macleod of the Presbytery of East Toronto, who suggested attaching numbers to a dream was not in the spirit of the recent Emmaus Project conference.

An amendment aimed at adding "alternative ministries" to the 10-per-year goal was eventually replaced; the final motion eliminated the numerical goal entirely. In the end, assembly passed a motion to "encourage presbyteries to be bold and imaginative in the development of new ministry opportunities, including the planting of new congregations."

## **Committee to Review Funding Formula for Regional Staff**

A SPECIAL COMMITTEE will review the funding formula used to allocate funds for synods' regional staff, and will report to the next assembly.

The motion was made by Rev. Dr. Gerard Booy of the Presbytery of Westminster, a commissioner whose synod was hardest hit by funding cuts. Under a new funding formula, which will take effect in 2011, the grant to the Synod of British Columbia is set to fall by \$74,000—about 50 per cent of its total grant in previous years.

Regional staff are overseen by synods and supported by block grants from the Women's Missionary Society and the Life and Mission Agency; the two organizations pooled their



resources and personnel to create the regional staff model in 1994. Beginning in 2009, the WMS was forced to halve its original \$390,000 portion of the grant to \$200,000 yearly. The LMA covered the shortfall for 2009 and 2010 by drawing funds from undesignated bequests. A new formula—developed at a meeting of synod conveners in September 2009—would provide each synod with enough money to support at least one regional staff person, with the remainder divided among the synods based on their membership.

"In making this amendment we're not trying to be difficult," said Booy. "We certainly understand that the LMA is in a difficult situation when it comes to the funding ... I just think it's not time to draw a line and say this is a done deal."

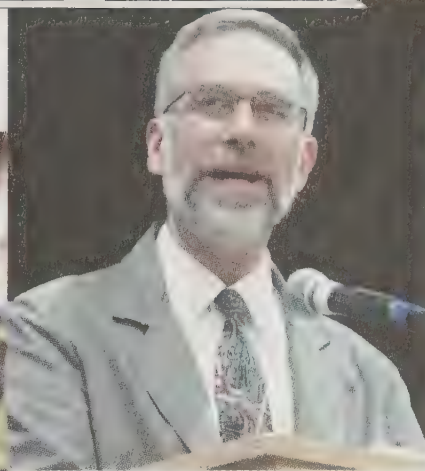
"Synod conveners were asked for their direct participation in re-jigging the formula," said Rev. Daniel Cho, outgoing convener of the LMA. "This is their product; for the court to ask the LMA to disregard the formula and come up with a new one is impractical. A lot of care has been taken in the process up to this point."

Rev. Heather Vais of Oak Ridges presbytery described the two days of prayer and debate with synod conveners that led to the new formula, arguing that the decision was not made lightly. "The real problem is not the formula," she told the court. "It's the money, man. Give us the money and we'll do something with it."

The motion passed by a slim margin, and the new committee's mandate will include seeking out ways to fill the shortfall. Vais, who was named convener, called on the members of the court and the church at large to help the committee find new sources of funding



From left: Rev. C. Joyce Hodgson, Presbytery of Lambton-West Middlesex, Rev. Andrew Johnston of the Presbytery of Ottawa, bottom, Rev. Peter Bush, Presbytery of Winnipeg.



for "a ministry the court seems to think very important."

### Longtime Missionary to Nigeria Honoured

ASSEMBLY OFFERED a minute of appreciation and a standing ovation for Rev. Arlene (Randall) Onuoha, who served as a missionary with the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria since 1978. Cho, outgoing convener of the LMA, called Onuoha "one of the living links of the partnership in mission of our two churches."

"Sometimes I have seen things that look like they're going to die—like projects, like people, like faith—because we start trying to figure things out for ourselves too much, and forget that we are in God's hands," an emotional Onuoha told the assembly. "And when we get to a point where we see that it is not us, it is God in us that we accomplish things, and we are able to let go and proceed in faith with the gifts God has given us, then I have seen things take off."

Onuoha noted that during her send-off in Nigeria, they said they were sending her to Canada to be a



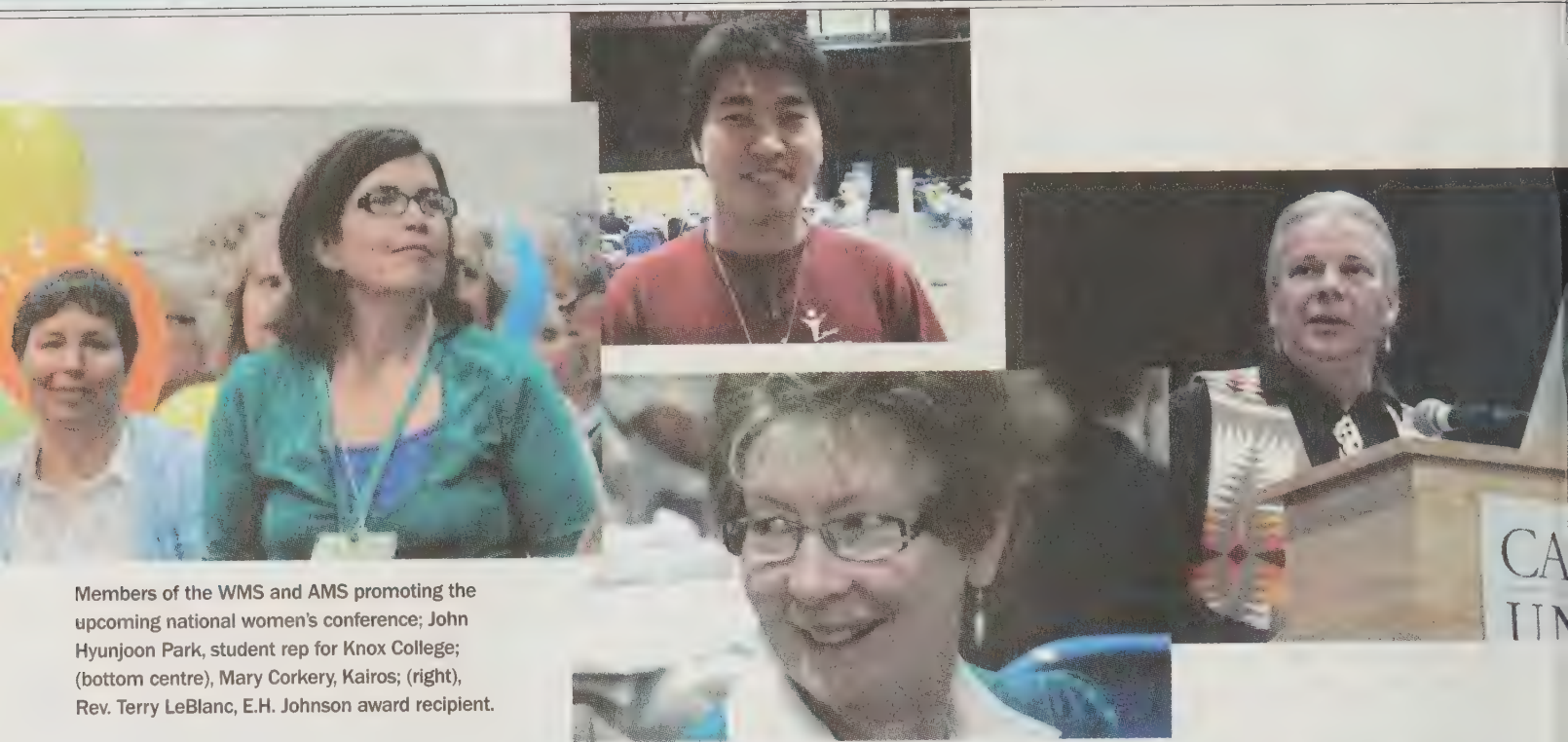
missionary here. She will search for a call within the PCC.

### Communion and the Laity

A MAJOR TOPIC of debate at the 2009 assembly returned in 2010 as the Clerks of Assembly presented possible legislation which would allow ordained elders commissioned by their presbyteries to administer communion within specific congregations.

The legislation was accompanied by a study paper, and the clerks recommended that the report be referred to sessions, presbyteries, the committee on theological education and the committee on church doctrine for study and report. Another report will come before the assembly next year. ➤





Members of the WMS and AMS promoting the upcoming national women's conference; John Hyunjoon Park, student rep for Knox College; (bottom centre), Mary Corkery, Kairos; (right), Rev. Terry LeBlanc, E.H. Johnson award recipient.

## Christian Palestinian Document Worthy of Study

A DOCUMENT crafted by Palestinian Christians sparked debate when the ecumenical and interfaith relations committee recommended it be sent to congregations, presbyteries and appropriate committees for study and discussion.

The document, titled *A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*, and also commonly referred to as the Kairos Palestine Document, includes language some commissioners worried was too strong, and which some organizations, including the Canadian Jewish Congress, have criticized.

"Kairos can't be sent on its own," said Rev. Mark Lewis of the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington. He suggested the Presbyterian Church in Canada may choose to formally adopt the document in the future, and secular society will ask if the church considered dissenting voices as it came to its decision.

Following discussion, assembly chose to include several additional documents intended to give context to

the Kairos Palestine statement. These include: a cover letter and study guide from the ecumenical and interfaith relations committee, and the responses of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the World Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Canadian Friends of Sabeel.

## Doctrine Committee Explores 'Supersessionism' and 'Inerrancy' of Scripture

A REPORT on supersessionism—the belief that the Christian New Covenant replaces or fulfills the Jewish Mosaic Covenant—will be sent to sessions, presbyteries and national committees who are urged to study the document and report back to the committee on church doctrine.

The 58-page report, titled *One Covenant of Grace: A Contemporary Theology of Engagement with the Jewish People*, contains a thorough overview of Old and New Testament principles as well as the views of prominent theologians throughout the centuries. It concludes with a proposed statement on the relationship between Canadian

Presbyterians and the Jewish people who, it suggests, both "worship and serve the One Living God."

In response to a question about the "literal inerrancy of scripture," the committee suggested that while Christians should certainly read the Bible, it must be studied in light of the particular time it was written, and that "research into historical and cultural context is valuable for biblical interpretation in our own time ... We need to understand practices and customs and languages not our own if we are going to be responsible to the authoritative text of the Bible."

The words used to describe the Bible in *Living Faith* and *A Catechism for Today* are, "necessary," "sufficient" and "reliable," but not "inerrant."

## No to Biennial Assemblies

WITHOUT DEBATE, the court reaffirmed the practice of annual assemblies.

"It must be Friday morning," joked Rev. Bert Vancook, convener of Assembly Council, who expected more discussion when the issue came before the court. ■



# Voices

"It is very difficult to go back to that five year old that I left ... I know for many years I blamed the church. I blamed the government. I blamed a religion, I blamed all the religions. In fact I even blamed God. But it's not God. It's not the religions. It's not the churches that did this. It's people. It's people like you and I who had a different belief about us. People who believed we were less than they were—nothing more than animals—but here we are. Ready to forgive. And live, side by side. And today, I can say to you, and I can say to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that I'm not only a survivor. I'm a witness to this horrible history."—*Terry Paul, Chief of the Membertou First Nation and a residential school survivor*

"Accept that you may not get forgiveness. We have heard from people all across the country that they aren't ready to forgive. They may never be ready to forgive. For them, it's forgiveness of self. Forgiving themselves for believing what they were told about their parents, about their culture, about their ancient spiritual beliefs and the beliefs of our Christian tradition. Don't get hung up on that point if forgiveness is not forthcoming ... Be the one who says it isn't over now. We need to keep listening until they're done talking."—*Marie Wilson, Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner*

"There is a need to move away from theology as the realm of experts to something that the common people understand, taking ownership over its transmissibility. It encourages the community to learn discernment so as to pass on the story to subsequent generations."—*Rev. Terry LeBlanc, founder and chair of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies and winner of this year's E. H. Johnson award for cutting-edge mission*

"Vilification of persons because of who they are, as opposed to what they have done, is a bright line that separates legitimate speech, which is just about everything, from hate speech. The public interest requires that we denounce true hate speech wherever and whenever we hear it."—*Eric Vernon, director of government relations and international affairs with the Canadian Jewish Congress*

"There is a gift in this moment, it is a refining moment. A moment of change. We are becoming forced to become a Kairos that is clearer than ever of why we're doing this work. It is God's work, and requires theological courage. We are in a moment of disaster. We have to be passionate."—*Mary Corkery, executive director of Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives*

"It is not a natural disaster in Gaza, but a human-made disaster, dependent on the demonization of the people there ... Gaza is the world's largest prison, hemmed in all sides. People there are denied the very necessities of life... "Any desire for an exclusive possession of the land will always ensure a conflict will ensue ... It is God's land, and therefore it must be a land of reconciliation, peace and love. God gives us the capacity, if we have the will, to live within in it, to establish justice and peace, and make it, in reality, God's land."—*Rev. Robert Assaly, Canadian Friends of Sabeel*

"It's about building disciples not only to serve within the church, but also in the community, at home and abroad. How should the church combat the ever-competitive secular world? How do we promote better discipleship and stewardship?"—*Wendy MacWilliams, student representative from Presbyterian College, Montreal*

"The more I study our God and His holy word, and the more I observe the reign of God through the work of the church, the more I realize it's not about me. It's about God. It's about the other ... Thus, I have been encouraged by you, inspired by God, to see how, although we are all different, we are willing to go forward on the same boat ... I have been strengthened by you, inspired by God, to see how, although we have different expertise and gifts and talents, yet we are willing to gather our thoughts, wisdom and resources to make our sailing on the boat adventurous and miraculous."—*John Hyunjoon Park, student representative from Knox College, Toronto*

"I learned from one of the bus drivers here that most of the fishermen in Cape Breton don't know how to swim. I don't know how to swim, but I don't think I'll fall overboard because God is guiding us with that sail. God is carrying us forward."—*Leah Yoo, student representative from the Vancouver School of Theology* ■



# Dragging the Anchor

IF ASSEMBLY NEVER MET AGAIN, WOULD ANYONE NOTICE? BY CALVIN BROWN

## *SAILING INTO THE FUTURE*

was the theme chosen for the 136th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, to reflect the Cape Breton heritage where it was held. The nautical theme was maintained and referred to in the daily worship times and by numerous report-givers. The theme hymn for the assembly was *Will Your Anchor Hold?* I couldn't help tying the theme and the hymn together and it gave the strange image of a ship sailing out of the harbour while dragging the anchor. The picture gets worse for not only is the ship slowed by the dragging anchor but the ship actually begins to go in circles as the anchor line tied to the rock holds the ship from moving out of the harbour.

I don't want to speak negatively about assembly. In truth, it was a profitable time of fellowship and a joy to meet old friends and new and to discover some interesting and faithful ministries that are being carried on across the country. I have been attending every assembly for the last 15 years as part of my work with Renewal Fellowship but the same question strikes me year after year: If assembly never met would it make any significant difference to Canada and the world we live in? That strange image that came to mind of ships and anchors may be an expression of the situation we find ourselves in as a church.

In this image, importantly, the line is not attached to the Rock of Jesus, but to the rock of tradition (the way we've always done things). We spend

much of our time going in circles, and much of our effort in trimming sails and fine tuning engines or swabbing the deck, but the ship just keeps going around and around and we don't sound the alarm. It seems we don't even mind too much because we have never actually decided where it is we want to go. As someone put it, if you don't know where it is you want to go then it doesn't really matter which route you take to get there. In our case it doesn't much matter if we keep doing the same things year after year. We keep getting the same results—declining membership and declining financial support. There may be leaks in the boat but they don't threaten to actually sink the ship, for a while.

The new image we need is one where Christ is the compass—directing where we should go—and the Spirit is the wind that takes us where God has told us to go. But to live in that image means we need to give more passionate attention to where the compass (Jesus) is pointing us. We will need to be moved by the wind of the Spirit and we will need to listen intently to where the ship owner (God) has told us to go.

We need two things to overcome our deadly apathy: The first is to put greater effort into discerning where the ship owner is sending us. Can you imagine spending the bulk of our time at assembly praying, listening to scripture and in the most profound earnestness seeking the Lord's orders? I don't mean the orders about maintaining the ship but the

We keep getting the same results—declining membership and declining financial support. There may be leaks in the boat but they don't threaten to actually sink the ship, for a while

orders to go places and do things like we've never imagined before. The second is to have such a passion for the cause that we train and prepare our young people so they can participate with full excitement that this life and death issue requires. There is no program or quick fix that is going to change things around for us. Our only hope is to heed the call, to seek renewal, and to commit ourselves totally to seeking first the kingdom of God believing as we sail on that "God has not promised us a quiet journey but a safe arrival in Jesus Christ." ■

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*Rev. Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC—[renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca](http://renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca)*



# Healing in our Midst

ASSEMBLY LISTENS TO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCES. BY CONNIE PURVIS

“THE CHURCH AS a community has often failed Gordon Williams, but he has never failed to see the church through the eyes of Jesus, his Lord and Saviour,” Rev. Andrew Johnston, minister at St. Andrew’s, Ottawa, told assembly, noting that Williams was once referred to as a “savage” by a member of the Presbyterian Church.

Williams schooled at the Presbyterian-run Birtle Indian Residential School, located west of Winnipeg. He endured the isolation imposed at the school, followed by the frustrations that came with being the only aboriginal student at the University of Manitoba, and then at Presbyterian College, Montreal. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister and served congregations in Peace River and Medicine Hat, Alta. But when he sought a call in Ontario, he was told “that parishioners east of Manitoba were not ready to accept Christianity from a ‘savage.’”

He left the ministry and embarked on a 25-year career with the Canadian government. Today, he chairs the Indian Residential School Survivor Committee, and is recognized as a spiritual elder by aboriginal communities across Canada. This was the first assembly he had been invited to attend, having never been sent as a commissioner.

At the opening worship in Cape Breton, outgoing moderator, Rev. Harvey Self apologized to Williams. “Gordon, we are sorry. We apologize. Your church apologizes to you and asks your forgiveness.”

Williams spoke at Tuesday evening’s Truth and Reconciliation event,

which also featured Membertou Chief Terry Paul, who was sent to a Catholic residential school at the age of five. With emotion cracking his voice, he thanked the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. “We believe it’s an important part of the process of healing. It is an important part because we want to make sure the people in this country hear our voices. Hear what was done.”

Rev. Terry LeBlanc, this year’s E.H. Johnson award winner, also spoke. He talked of the need for aboriginal theological education that weaves together native world views and context. “That aboriginal people were considered ‘godless heathens’ by theists who considered God omnipresent is an idea I

think is a little contradictory ... I believe the church needs aboriginal people doing theology because I believe the premises on which we base our theology are different.”

Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson gave the assembled a sense of the first national Truth and Reconciliation event to be held the following week in Winnipeg.

“My hope and prayer for us all, from wherever we come, is that we would recognize that we are one people with one Creator and one Great Spirit, that we would all recognize we’re on that long road of learning and we will never cease to learn as we walk along that long road,” concluded the moderator, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale. ■



Lori Ransom, the PCC’s healing and reconciliation animator, Rev. Gordon Williams, Terry Paul, Chief of the Membertou First Nation, Marie Wilson, commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Rev. Terry LeBlanc, chair of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies.

## online extra

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# Goldilocks Goes to Church

IT MAY NOT BE PERFECT, BUT IT IS GOD'S HOME.

BY ELIZABETH ALBRECHT-BISSET

ILLUSTRATION BY JILLIAN DITNER



Once upon a time, there was a Christian who wanted to find a comfortable church—one that was just right. Her name was Goldilocks.

Goldilocks went to a church around the corner from her home. The pews were comfortable and the music was pleasant. People were friendly.

Unfortunately, a few weeks later, the youth led the service. They played hymns on guitars and performed a play about the Good Samaritan. They compared the injured man to the needy in her community. They talked about feeding the homeless. Goldilocks wasn't sure about this. Nobody seemed

interested when she suggested that the guitars were out of tune. The minister didn't seem pleased when she suggested that the homeless might mess up the church. Suddenly the pews didn't seem as soft as they had. Goldilocks decided to move on.

Goldilocks found a big new church. The people said "Amen," a lot, but they seemed to mean it and the choir was nice. They told her they only used professional musicians to worship God. Goldilocks felt comfortable again.

Soon Goldilocks noticed some problems. The choir sang the same songs over and over. The pastor needed to stop making that funny, distracting movement to keep his glasses on his face. The Sunday school children were so disruptive when one was trying to pray! The choir director said he would be very pleased to add a new song if she had any in mind. The pastor laughed and said he'd watch his glasses. The Sunday school teachers promised to keep the children from getting so excited.

After a few weeks, more things went wrong. The choir director told her he couldn't add all 50 new pieces she'd brought. The pastor told her he had no intention of getting contact lenses. The Sunday school teachers told her Jesus called little children to him and they weren't going to keep the ➤



kids out of the church just because they talked a bit.

Time to move on again. This time, the church was several blocks away. It was big and old. The minister was witty (and she didn't wear glasses). The choir director assured her that she never repeated a piece until at least a year had elapsed.

Again, Goldilocks started noticing things that bothered her. The words to the Lord's Prayer were different. Sometimes they even referred to the Trinity as, "Parent, Child and Spirit." She mentioned this to various people, but they just said she'd get used to the new ways. She didn't.

This time she went halfway across town to a little church that was old and quaint. It was easy to sit and imagine one was in heaven.

Soon she noticed that some of the words they said were always the same. She asked the minister about this and he said it was called a liturgy. She suggested they jazz it up a bit. She also noticed that the building seemed older and less quaint than she'd thought at first. The walls in the church hall needed paint and the stairs had hollows where generations of worshippers had walked. Several people agreed with her and they organized a painting committee. Unfortunately the colour they used was a yellow. Goldilocks hated yellow. In a few weeks, the words in the service changed a bit. The minister said that was because it was Lent and the liturgy changed for the church season. Goldilocks didn't like the way it changed.

For a while, Goldilocks watched church on TV. Some of the services were too excitable and some were too dull. Sometimes she didn't agree with the sermon. Sometimes she didn't like what the choir sang. Sometimes she just didn't like the angle they filmed it on.

Eventually there was nothing left for Goldilocks to do but read her Bible alone. Goldilocks missed being with other people. After a while she found that there were things in the Bible she



didn't like, so she tried a different version. But the things she read were still the same even though the words were different. She was disturbed by Jesus' friends. That Mary Magdalene might have been a prostitute! Matthew was a tax collector! What about that woman taken in adultery? She'd never noticed before what a bunch of misfits they were.

Goldilocks decided that the only way to continue was to talk to God. She told Him what she thought about the churches, the TV services and the friends Jesus had. First she waited for tongues of fire and a great loud roar. Then she waited for a still small voice. Obviously God wasn't sure what to say to her about the mess.

At first she was angry. Then she began to feel lonely. She went back to the first church to ask the minister about it. The minister wasn't there when she arrived, but one of the members was outside planting flowers. Goldilocks was about to walk away when she decided she just had to talk to someone.

At first the lady with the flowers looked surprised. Then she smiled. She introduced herself and said her name was Faith. Faith listened as Goldilocks talked. Finally Faith said, "I think God is telling you something. It doesn't sound to me like anything was wrong with any of the churches. It sounds like the problem is you." Goldilocks was so surprised she just stood there with her mouth open. Faith continued, "I

don't always understand everything God does either, but I know God cares. I also know that I'm not perfect and neither is the church. It's made up of people like you and me. But I believe that God can work through us even if the building isn't pretty, the music isn't always what I like, the minister doesn't preach like Billy Graham and the people are sometimes pigheaded."

Goldilocks went home and looked at her Bible again. She noticed there were a lot of things in it about Jesus being a shepherd and looking after lost people. She wondered if she was lost and if God had sent her to Faith. Goldilocks decided to go back that Sunday. The organist hit a few wrong notes at one point, but Goldilocks was too busy thinking about the words to the hymn they were singing to notice. The pastor repeated himself a little during the sermon, but Goldilocks was so struck by his story about his trip to a local prison she didn't really care. When they asked for volunteers to help hand out coffee to the homeless, Goldilocks volunteered. It was awful coffee, but talking to the people was wonderful. When she got home, Goldilocks felt good.

If you go to that church, you will find Goldilocks there. Ministers have come and gone, and Faith has moved out of town, but Goldilocks is still a member. The organ is broken, the church hall needs new paint, the kids are sometimes noisy and the coffee is still bad. But to Goldilocks, the church is a wonderful place full of love. It isn't perfect, but she knows that even though she sees it in a mirror, dimly, there are still beautiful glimpses of the light of God all around. ■

*Elizabeth Albrecht-Bisset is a teacher in Toronto and has written and edited children's dictionaries and educational books. She is an elder at Trinity, York Mills. This story was presented at Trinity's session retreat in October 2009.*



New Moderator: Rev. Dr. Herb Gale

# Stories of Generosity

PERCY'S MEAT SLICER. BY HERB GALE

## HIS NAME IS PERCY.

He is a frequent visitor at the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry Centre, dropping in for a cup of coffee and a sandwich or some homemade bannock. His home is a makeshift tent he has erected on the banks of the Saskatchewan River. Percy is a survivor, not only of the streets and hard winters of Saskatoon, but also of the residential school system. Taken from his family when he was only a child, forced to stop speaking his native language and abused by staff, he, like so many of the children ripped from their homes and culture, continues to carry the scars from that experience. A chronic alcoholic, he has been unable to hold down a job or sustain a relationship. He remains married to his wife, but he understands that he is welcome home only when he is sober.

Last fall, Percy mentioned to Rev. Stewart Folster, director of the SNCM, that he would be receiving a financial settlement from the federal government for the years he had spent in the school system and the years of abuse. "When I get the money, I would like to make a gift to the centre," Percy promised. The following February, a taxi carrying Percy and his wife arrived at the centre. Percy waited in the taxi while his wife walked inside and handed Stewart an envelope containing the gift her

husband had promised. Inside was a cheque for \$1,000. The SNCM staff decided to use the money to purchase a commercial meat slicer, something both useful and long lasting.

When I asked Stewart how he feels about Percy's gift, his response was immediate: "It gives me hope that the

[SHE] HANDED  
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INSIDE WAS  
A CHEQUE  
FOR \$1,000

people who were in the residential school system will find healing and reconciliation." Percy's generous gift speaks eloquently to the kind of ministry that SNCM provides. Look out in the congregation during the centre's Sunday worship service and you will find Percy singing hymns of praise with the gathered community. He is no longer just a survivor, he is a child of God.



Rev. Dr. Gale addresses the assembly.

During my moderatorial year, I am inviting each of us and all of us to resolve to help grow the generosity of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I am also inviting Presbyterians from across Canada to share the stories of generosity that have impacted their lives and the life of the church. I'll be sharing some of those stories in my monthly column for the *Record* and on the moderator's website. I am looking forward to hearing those stories and sharing them with the church, for they are all signs of hope and reminders of what God can do through God's grace. My guess is that in the sharing of our stories of generosity, we will all be amazed. After all, if an unnamed boy with five small loaves and two fish can be enough to feed a multitude when placed in Jesus' hands, just imagine what Jesus could have done with a meat slicer! ■

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving. Follow his journey as moderator by reading his blog at [presbyterian.ca/moderator](http://presbyterian.ca/moderator).



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## Guelph, Ont.

At a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of his ordination to Word and Sacrament, Liz Sandals, MPP Guelph, presented a scroll to Rev. Dr. Arnold Bethune on behalf of the Ontario Legislature, expressing appreciation for his dedication and service both within the Presbyterian Church and the greater community.



## West Park, Red Deer, Alta.

West Park turned 50 in April. Marian Paulson is a charter member—she must know some great stories of early challenges. The current minister, Rev. Dewald Delport, fortified by her support and some cake, will help usher new stories.



## St. Andrew's, Belleville, Ont.

St. Andrew's is the proud home of two recent graduates: On the left of the effervescent Rev. Anne-Marie Jones: Carol Merrill received her Certificate in Christian Faith and Life II, from Knox College's lay education program. On Jones' right: David Berkers graduated from Queen's University with a Master's of Divinity.





**Knox-St. Andrew's,  
Dutton, Ont.**

Knox-St. Andrew's is celebrating 10 years of amalgamation with a number of special events throughout the year. Here, church attendees pose in period costume, following an old-fashioned church service in February.



**St. Andrew's, Pictou, N.S.**

Pictou Panda Kirk has come to live at St. Andrew's. PPK, dressed in tartan, is believed to be the first bear to take up residence in a Presbyterian church. The children promised to teach and share God's love with Panda Kirk and he will return often to be a part of the children's ministry.



**St. Paul's, Warton, Ont.**

The Royal Canadian College of Organists and the Organ Historical Society in the United States both bestowed citations on the 1906 Breckels & Matthews pipe organ at St. Paul's in May. Celebrations were held with a public concert featuring organists from the Grey-Bruce Centre of the RCCO.

From Left: Bob Rix, (organist, St. Thomas's Anglican, Owen Sound); Mark Himmelman, (organist, St. George's Anglican, Owen Sound); Bea Craig, (organist, St. Paul's); Ann Clark, (organist, Port Elgin United); Laura McAlpine, (organist, St. Thomas's Anglican, Walkerton); Richard Smith, (organist, St. John's United, Warton); Stephen Nusko, (St. Paul's); Fr. Ed Wagner, (pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran, Chesley); Mary Butchart, (organist, St. Paul's).

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River John and Toney River, N.S.; St. George's and St. David's; Interim Moderator Rev. Lara Scholey, 1159 Campbell Hill Rd., RR 2, Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0; 902-485-6137; [bethel@bellaliant.com](mailto:bethel@bellaliant.com).

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Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Seung Kim, 5 Jamie Cres., Petawawa, ON K8H 3N2; 613-687-2463; [seung37@hotmail.com](mailto:seung37@hotmail.com).

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Aurora, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 ext. 223 or 1-800-619-7301; [dmuir@presbyterian.ca](mailto:dmuir@presbyterian.ca); [www.standrewspresbyterian.com](http://www.standrewspresbyterian.com).

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Guelph, Kortright; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Wayne Dawes, c/o Knox's Galt Presbyterian Church, 2 Grand Ave. S., Cambridge, ON N1S 2L2; 519-621-8120; [sdawes@knoxsgalt.org](mailto:sdawes@knoxsgalt.org).

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Newmarket, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; [minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca](mailto:minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca).

Schomberg, Emmanuel; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeremy Lowther; 905-857-2419; [jlowther1845@rogers.com](mailto:jlowther1845@rogers.com).

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#### **SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

No vacancies at this time.

## **Obituaries**



**LANGILLE, OLLA MARY,**  
went to her heavenly  
home April 5, 2010.  
She was a longtime  
reader of the *Pres-  
byterian Record* and  
a faithful member

of Sedgewick Memorial Presbyterian  
Church in Tatamagouche, N.S. She  
was an outstanding mother and grand-  
mother who will be missed by all.

**GRIBBEN, DOROTHY,** longtime member  
of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church,  
Mount Pleasant, Ont., went to be with  
her Lord on March 24, 2010. ■

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CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

# Called to Wonder

**SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME FOR A FAMILY REUNION.** What do you know about your family? Who are your ancestors? Can you name your grandparents and great-grandparents? Where were they born?

Who will be attending your reunion? How is everyone related? From where will they be travelling? Is there a family member with the same name as you? Is anyone named after her mother or grandmother or aunt?

**Summer is a great time to remember Biblical families:** Read the names of the children of Jacob (Genesis 29:32-35; Genesis 30:5-8, 10-12, 17-24; Genesis 35:18) or the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17).

## FAMILY REUNION WORD SEARCH

Words can be found in all directions. When finished, write down the unused letters to make a bonus phrase.

G	C	S	H	S	N	P	B	M	O	M	G	S	R	D
I	R	S	E	I	R	R	U	O	S	E	R	T	P	N
P	T	A	S	V	O	E	R	O	C	O	A	O	E	O
L	A	U	N	T	I	I	B	E	R	G	N	R	D	B
A	O	S	H	D	G	T	I	M	E	G	D	Y	I	B
C	I	E	T	I	M	N	A	N	E	L	C	A	G	I
E	R	M	N	N	H	O	E	L	I	M	H	Y	R	R
G	R	A	N	D	F	A	T	H	E	R	I	R	E	T
N	O	N	A	P	L	E	C	H	K	R	L	T	E	H
E	L	D	R	O	O	T	S	O	E	I	D	S	R	S
P	S	E	G	A	I	R	R	A	M	R	N	E	T	S
H	V	Y	R	E	T	H	G	U	A	D	N	C	R	K
E	S	I	S	T	E	R	E	E	G	A	E	N	I	L
W	E	L	C	N	U	+	F	A	L	I	T	A	B	O
S	T	N	E	R	A	P	H	C	H	O	U	S	E	F

ANCESTRY  
AUNT  
BIRTHS  
BOND  
BROTHER  
CHILDREN  
CLAN  
COUSIN

DAD  
DAUGHTER  
FOLKS  
GENEALOGY  
GRANDCHILD  
GRANDFATHER  
GRANDMOTHER  
GROUP

HOUSE  
KIN  
LINEAGE  
MARRIAGES  
MEMBERS  
MOM  
NAMES  
NEPHEW

NIECE  
ORIGIN  
PARENTS  
PAST  
PEDIGREE  
PLACE  
RELATIVES  
ROOTS

SISTER  
SON  
STORY  
TIES  
TREE  
TRIBE  
UNCLE





Too often I have been left to sink in the quicksand of a 'live and let be' fraternity. Too often I have been allowed to hang myself in an, 'I'm OK, you're OK' sorority

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

camp going to Grandma's house for the water. I say idling because even as a worldly 10-year-old that knew how to drive, I only knew how to drive in bull low. My legs weren't long enough or strong enough to push in the clutch to change gears while driving, so I had developed the technique of putting the truck into bull low and turning over the starter without engaging the clutch. The old truck would start and instantly bolt ahead to idle down the road. I would kneel on the seat so as to see over the steering wheel as I drove the truck at the breakneck speed of about one mile per hour.

"I can walk faster than this," Ricky said. "In fact, I am going to get out of the truck and put a stick up to see if you're moving."

"Go right ahead," I said, somewhat irritated. "Why don't you use the bone in your head instead of a stick to check to see if I'm moving or not."

Ricky bailed out and walked beside the truck. Pretty soon he ran ahead and then he ran all around the truck.

"Hey this is fun," said Ricky. "I dare you to get out and run along side the truck too. Just turn down the window and you can stand on the running board and correct the steering through the window whenever you need to."

And so, I did. I walked along beside the pickup on one side, then ran behind to walk on Ricky's side, then ran back to my side and jumped on the running board to correct the steering as needed. Things were going along splendidly as we both strolled along outside the pickup when we ran into the lumber mill owner, Mr. Cameron. Mr. Cameron was like a second grandpa to me, always with enough time to show genuine interest in what was going on in my 10-year-old life. There was no way in the world we could just walk on past him without

having a chinwag. We were drawn up short, brought to an abrupt halt, right in front of the man. The truck, being somewhat on automatic pilot, kept going down the dirt two-track.

"Hi boys," said Mr. Cameron. "Who's driving the truck?"

The truck kept on idling down the road as I tried to come up with some plausible explanation that would both explain the truck's continued progress as well as secure our release to catch up and correct the steering before everything went into the toilet. Both Ricky and I were still stuttering when the front wheel of the truck hit a stone and the truck careened slowly off the road. It nailed a huge ponderosa pine tree dead centre with its bumper as though it had been precision aimed. The truck's compound low gear was so low that its rear wheels didn't stop; they just continued to slowly churn and dig themselves into the sandy dirt.

I can't say as I remember exactly how it all turned out. Neither can I ask Mr. Cameron or Ricky for they have both passed away; Mr. Cameron a couple of years after this episode and Ricky just a few years prior to its present telling. But I can remember how it didn't turn out. There was no haranguing lecture, there was no scathing punishment, but neither was it just laughed off or ignored. I know for sure that we never did anything so foolish again, at least involving a truck. It seems to me now that Ricky and I were suitably admonished by Mr. Cameron's simple question, "Who's driving the truck?" And the reason that this could happen so effectively was because of the deep abiding love and respect we had for the man, and he for us. Within the bonds of a mutual abiding love and respect, most often all it takes to admonish and correct is an intentional presence and a simple

insightful question.

It strikes me now, in the light of remembering this story, that as a Christian I need this. As a Christian I need followers of Jesus that I can form deep abiding bonds of love and respect with. And I need those people to simply question me when I get off track and begin to follow my own way instead of The Way. I need to not be ignored when I am on the wrong path. I need people to care enough about me, people who I care about, to admonish me with a question, to correct me with a presence, right in the midst of a wrongful act perhaps, or even its consideration. Too often I have been left to sink in the quicksand of a "live and let be" fraternity. Too often I have been allowed to hang myself in an, "I'm OK, you're OK" sorority. Brothers and sisters, with regards to sin, that's not what I need.

The Bible promises me a church where I will be disciplined; where I will be loved, and admonished. It doesn't take much, just deep abiding love, an intentional presence and timely insightful questions like, "Who's driving the truck?" The Bible promises me a church where the word of Christ will be encouraged to dwell in me richly; where I will be taught and admonished in all wisdom; and with gratitude in my heart, I will be caused to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. (Colossians 3:16) And it's the church that the Bible promises me that I really need in my spiritual journey. ■

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*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*





# Who's Driving the Truck?

THE BIBLE PROMISES A CHURCH THAT WILL DISCIPLE ITS MEMBERS. **BY DAVID WEBBER**

ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**IT WAS MY CHORE** to pack the water. For me, like most 10-year-old boys, chores were an abomination. Chores sucked, literally sucked the life out of you. Chores were the one part of life that you were allowed to hate. It didn't matter if it was chopping wood, lugging it in, shoveling the snow, doing the dishes or hauling the water, chores were a dreaded part of life. There were only two ways to survive them: friends and daydreaming.

The friend showed up to save the day just before I left to get the water. Ricky looked at the two buckets in my hand and snorted. "Looks like you got chores to do. Want me to come along?"

"If ya want to," I said. "I'll even let you pack one of these here buckets."

"Nah," said Ricky, "I don't feel a need to do that. Say, why dontcha use your dad's ol' panel truck to haul the water instead of lugging it by hand all the way across the camp?"

"'Cause I don't have a driving license and 'cause Dad never said I could," I replied.

"Ya don't have to have a driving license to drive that ol' truck in the lumber camp, silly. Besides, if ya used the truck then we could fill up a cream can and haul twice as much water."

The daydream had showed up too, nestled in the guise of efficiency. I could instantly see myself driving the truck, a real man. Oh the seductiveness of the charlatan manhood, for a boy of 10.

And so, daydream-inspired, and for the sake of efficiency, I stole my dad's truck, or at least seriously borrowed it. Suddenly the packing of water was no longer a chore, but an exciting adventure. We loaded up an old 20-gallon cream can into the back of the 1956 Dodge one-ton panel truck. Soon the two of us were idling along the two-track dirt road, heading across the lumber

continued on page 49





Rev. Karen Hest with Simon and Thomas.  
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Send your Christmas-themed art on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to:

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Please be sure to write your name, age and your church's information on the back of each entry.

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and don’t take yourself too seriously —  
take God seriously.”

*Micah 6:8, The Message*



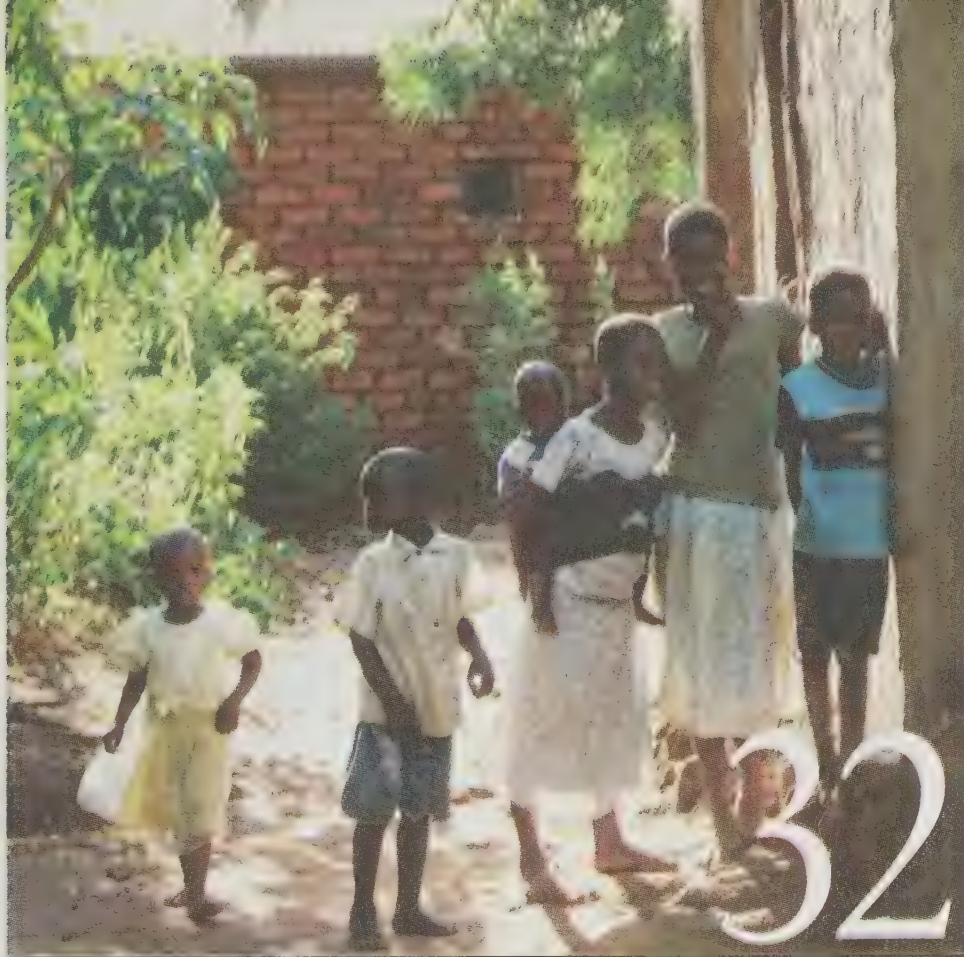
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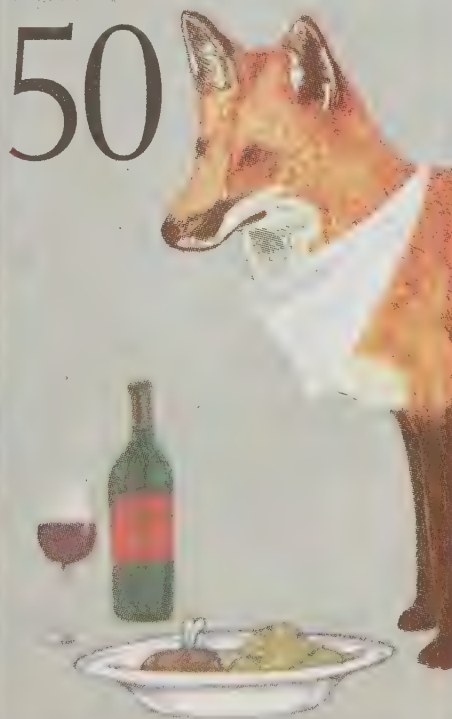
# Malawi



On the Cover: Photo by Connie Purvis

DAVID WEBBER:  
FOR THE JOURNEY

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# Beyond Truth and Relevance

THE LEGACY OF REV. DR. DECOURCY RAYNER. BY DAVID HARRIS

The late DeCourcy Rayner edited the *Presbyterian Record* from 1958-1977. A minister and journalist, he was elected moderator of the General Assembly in his last year as editor.

His editorial direction revealed that Rayner was concerned about the relevance of Christianity during a time in which the turbulence from sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll was blowing the doors off the church.

In 1972, *Godspell* came to Toronto. It blew away the city with a cast and crew most of whose names today are in the who's who of Hollywood film and television personalities.

What made *Godspell* different from other musicals of course, was that it is a retelling of the Christian gospel (mostly Matthew, but with a significant contribution from Luke). (*Godspell* is an earlier version of the Anglo-Saxon for "good words.")

The play may have helped put Toronto on the entertainment map, but not all Christians were amused; some protested outside the theatre. DeCourcy Rayner was not among them.

In a June 3, 1972, article in the *Globe and Mail*, Rayner told the writer: "I went prepared to be critical, but after the initial shock of seeing biblical characters portrayed as present-day clowns, I entered into the spirit of the production.

"It has a great meaning for the present generation. ... I was favorably impressed, and hope that many young people see this production."

I wonder if Rayner foresaw the emerging tension between the concern for relevance he applauded in *Godspell* and the perception of truth as static?

Before you reply that the nature of



truth is that it never changes, let me explain. Truth means many things, depending on the context. In simple, everyday mathematics, one plus one equals two. That is a truth that cannot change.

The statement: "The sun will rise tomorrow," posits a different kind of truth, based on scientific observation. But because that truth is grounded on empirical evidence—observation—it does not have the same certainty as a simple math formula.

Human observations *could* have missed something and the sun *could* explode tomorrow as a result. Unlikely, but philosophically possible.

And then there is the truth of faith. By definition, faith is something that cannot be argued from mathematical or philosophical premises. The medieval enterprise of faith seeking reason was an acknowledgement of this.

Philosophers sought to show that faith, while based on an initial suspension of knowledge, was perfectly reasonable and logical. And truths could be drawn from that faith.

Contemporary western philosophy and culture are not so convinced. Research has shown that what moves people now to adopt or practice Christianity is the degree to which they see it as relevant in their world and in their life.

How can faith inform their daily

decisions and how can faith help explain their world? Whether Jesus Christ is divine is of less importance than whether his teachings are relevant.

This is quite different from those who seek a certainty from their faith and for whom the belief that Jesus Christ is divine is a necessary starting point.

But these differences need not be mutually exclusive. The early church did not require people to believe in Jesus' divinity as a requirement to become Christian. There was a whole program to instruct seekers, as we call them today, in the faith.

Today it is more a matter of demonstration and persuasion than instruction. That is why *Godspell* struck a chord. In it, Jesus is approachable. He is both an Everyman and a beyond-Everyman character.

I think this is what DeCourcy Rayner saw in the play. Fortunately for us in the church today, DeCourcy's legacy lives on. As you can read on pages 30 and 31, there is an annual prize given in his name by Armour Heights, Toronto.

This year's winning essay addresses the tension between relevance and truth by concluding that both miss the mark somewhat.

Author Scott Flemming, a theology student at Knox, Toronto, says we shouldn't be asking: "'What should we be doing better?' or 'what should we know more about?' but 'what can we do to get as close to [Jesus] our lover as possible?'"

I think DeCourcy would like that. ■

David Harris



# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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## A Revival Challenge

I was very excited, as a first-time commissioner to General Assembly, when Rev. Peter Bush moved that the Presbyterian Church in Canada commit itself to planting 10 congregations a year for five years (2012-2016). Imagine my disappointment when the assembly adopted a watered down amendment to the motion, which had no specific call to action and no timeline in which to act.

So I am thrilled beyond words to report that the Presbytery of Pickering passed a motion at our June meeting to make it a priority to plan and implement a new ministry in the next two years. I'd like to extend a friendly challenge to other presbyteries. That would mean 45 new ministries ... this could be the beginning of a bright new future into which we would all sail together.

REBEKAH MITCHELL, OSHAWA, ONT.

## Reluctance to Change

*Re A Cry to a Dying Denomination,  
Letters, June*

I can't agree more with the points raised in David Crawford's letter.

I do think there are people in our denomination who are crying out for change and are willing to try new ways of reaching the unreached. Unfortunately, they get frustrated by constantly running into brick walls of reluctance to change and so they eventually go elsewhere. How sad.

NORM GRANT, ON OUR WEBSITE

## Change and Progress

*Re Ethnicity, Identity and Isolation, April*

As an immigrant, I consider myself qualified to remind the author that the general expectation in this country is that newcomers to Canada come here with the intention of integrating into

# Letters



Canadian society, thus becoming Canadians (rather than the hyphenated Canadians that unthinking administrations often classify us as). And if this premise seems logical in relation to social assimilation, then why shouldn't it also apply to spiritual integration?

It is critically important in preserving the sacred tenets of our denomination that we never forget the critical difference between "change" and "progress": only progress holds the promise of being universally beneficial.

I found Mr. Faiz's article to be divisive, to consist of narrow, self-serving, shallow ethnic opinions, and to be an affront to the extremely accommodating Presbyterian Church that I have known since it first offered me a much-needed spiritual home.

DON MULCAHY, STRATHROY, ONT. ➤

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## Pontius' Puddle



### Housekeeping Alert

*Re If All Are One, How Far Does It Go?, June*

Tradition said "no" to Jesus Christ when he broke with the then-Jewish traditions. Tradition said "no" to Paul and his ideas espoused in Galatians 3:28. All down through history, tradition has said "no" to equality of the sexes and the races. When tradition learns to accept Jesus' radical teachings then there may be hope for the acceptance of Galatians 3:28 and for it to become the norm.

It would seem tradition outranked both Jesus and Paul and it intends to outrank anyone who would seek to have the words of Galatians 3:28 become the norm. Tradition does not

have the capacity to love. Tradition only knows how to stifle love.

MARY WILTON, OSHAWA, ONT.

When someone asks who I am, I tell them I'm a Christian. Not Canadian, not of Dutch descent, not a man, just a Christian. As Christians we need to spread this word to all Jews, Greeks, slave or free that we all become one in Christ. I'm a Christian.

MIKE LUYCKX, MILTON, ONT.

### Questions Arising

*Re God in Other Religions, June*

Please ask Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls to write a response, as a Christian theologian, to the same questions she

puts to her Jewish, Buddhist and Islamic colleagues with a foreword like her own written by one of the other three.

JAMES M. THOMPSON, OTTAWA

### Ecumenical Economics

In my small city of 32,000, we have two Catholic churches, two United churches, two Lutheran churches, one each of Anglican, Presbyterian, Orthodox, Alliance, Nazarene, Baptist, Bethany Pentecostal churches and several evangelical groups, plus of course the Salvation Army.

If in the future some can no longer carry on financially, will the Christian message die out? Not very likely, but a more ecumenical hierarchy might emerge to the glory of God.

H. BEAUGRAND, PENTICTON, B.C.

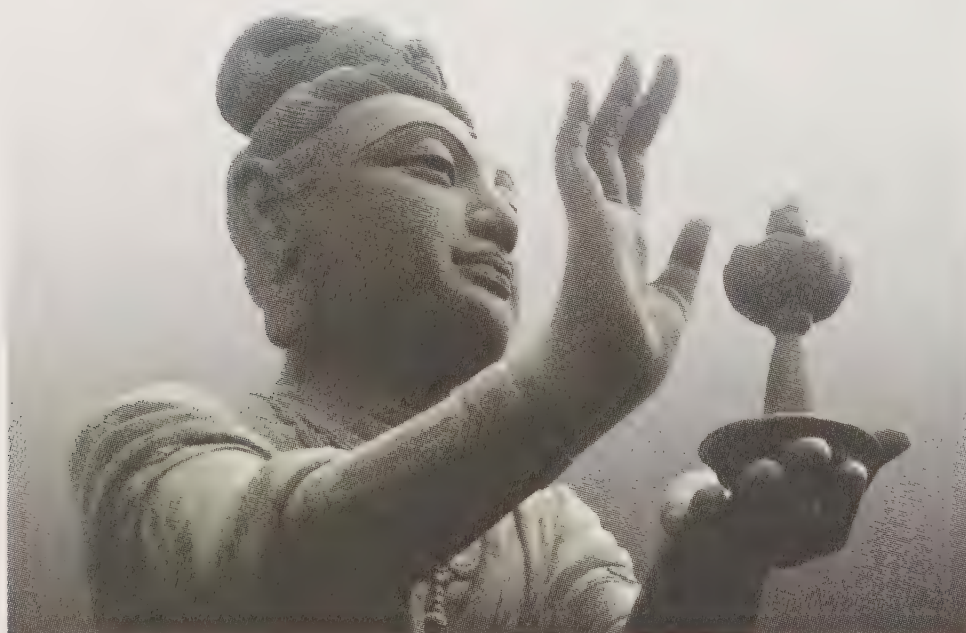
### Remembering Knox

On July 23, 1637, Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the minister in St. Giles', Edinburgh, for reading a liturgy from England. Earlier the same Sunday, Patrick Henderson had read the service from John Knox's liturgy without protest. Written and extempore prayer for Presbyterians goes back to Knox and Calvin. In this year, when there are celebrations commemorating Knox's 450th Scottish anniversary, we might remember some of his written prayers.

IAN WISHART, ST. JOHN'S

### Beginning at the Beginning

First, congratulations to the *Record* for garnering so many recent church



"God in Other Religions," June 2010 issue



press awards, including the prestigious A.C. Forrest Memorial Award and of course, Best in Class. I believe the number of awards in one year likely exceeds those won by the *Record* ever. It should send a clear message to the church that in the eyes of many, including your peers, the *Record* is doing an exceptional job. Of course, there will always be some readers whose "season of discontent" is perennial.

Secondly, I am heartened that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is beginning at the beginning, which will add to its credibility, especially with native communities, and ensure a thorough examination and more importantly, resolution, of the issues.

**L. JUNE STEVENSON, NEWMARKET, ONT.**

**Editor's Note:** Ms. Stevenson was editor of *Glad Tidings* for 24 years and a WMS delegate to Sacred Assembly, Ottawa, and to the Presentation of Confession to First Nations, Winnipeg, 1994.

### Well Done

Congratulations on being named the best denominational magazine on the continent, for the year, by the esteemed Associated Church Press. The article in the June issue describes the qualities and features, including artwork, that made our magazine the top-rated one. The *Record* was considered the best in the category that receives the most award entries.

I always enjoy reading it, now I know why. Well done!

**CAL WITHERS, LONDON, ONT.**

### Borg Cannot Be Ignored

*Re Reading Materials, Letters, June*

Tom Eyre questions the inclusion of Marcus Borg in the February Theology 101 reading list. Fair enough. Let me explain.

A reading list in theology is intended to introduce a broad range of resources in the field. The purpose of my February list was to

highlight some of the books about God being read within and outside the church today. These books are worth noting because they have captured the attention of the reading public, not because they may or may not be consistent with Christian teaching.

That said, Marcus Borg is, in my judgment, a brilliant writer but a bad theologian. He tramples on the Christian tradition and makes mistakes for which a first year theology student would be failed. By denying the central Christian conviction that Jesus was fully human and fully divine, Borg sets himself outside the bounds of Christian orthodoxy.

The fact that Borg's dumbed-down version of progressive Christianity is so popular is indeed troubling. But for whatever reason, his books have captured the imagination of a segment of the population, and therefore cannot simply be ignored.

**JOHN VISSERS, PRINCIPAL,  
PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL**

### Food-Friendly Churches

Our new moderator, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, is coming to cut anniversary cakes at churches across Canada. But how friendly is the food at the church for this man with celiac disease who must eat a gluten-free diet? Here are some ways to make your church food friendly:

Offer a choice. When serving communion, offer gluten-free wafers in a separate, labeled small dish on the same larger plate as the regular communion bread. Take note that spaghetti dinners are also off-limits to those with celiac disease unless another option (such as rice pasta) is offered separate from traditional wheat pasta.

Watch out for cross-contamination. This means you cannot throw all the leftovers from communion into the same ziplock bag for later. One crumb from the bread containing gluten can seriously ➤

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## FRONT Letters

harm the digestive tract of someone with celiac disease.

Hidden sources of gluten are everywhere: caesar salad dressing, hot dogs, deli meats, sausages, soy sauce, broth and soup bases. Just because something is labelled "wheat free" doesn't mean it is gluten free. Gluten is also found in barley and rye. Any product derived from these three main sources will also contain gluten. An easy idea is to label everything that contains gluten with a small picture of wheat.

RAMONA BROWN MONSOUR,  
GUELPH, ONT.

### Boosted by a Gift

*Re In Song, June 1, Online*

Andrew Donaldson—what a gift! Thank you so much for this beautiful article about Bruce, Cheryl, David and me! I don't get a lot of reviews in my biz, so what you have written is a wonderful thing.

Thanks for this boost! (I needed it.)

LINNEA GOOD, SUMMERLAND, B.C.

### Corrections and Complaints

*Re A Call for Sermon Topics, YouTube Style, July/August*

Thanks for reporting this. Unfortunately the website you mention is missing a "k." It should be [knoxnotes.com](http://knoxnotes.com).

SCOTT MCANDLESS, LEAMINGTON, ONT.

My letter to the editor was edited to such an extent that the explicit meaning was lost! The point was that Marcus Borg (who denies the divinity of Jesus) was a terrible choice for recommended Christian reading.

I am greatly disappointed!

TOM EYRE

It is upsetting when you spell my name incorrectly.

ROBERT FLINDALL, WOODSTOCK, ONT.

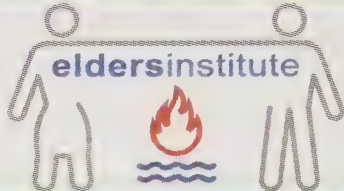
### Editor Responds:

Rev. McAndless—Knoted. Thank you. Rev. Flindall, you are right to be upset. Our apologies for the error.

Mr. Eyre—we regret your disappointment. We are compelled to present all the voices that participate in this very important conversation amongst Presbyterians. To make that possible, each letter needs to be edited to its core issues. We may have failed in your case, but our intention is to be as representative in every way as possible. In that vein: Every letter this month has been edited to give access to all writers. The full text can be found on [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca).

Lastly, our apologies to Helen Macdonald, a proud member of St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont., whose beautiful church submission was incorrectly credited in the July/August issue. ■

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# 4'33"

BEGIN ANYWHERE. BY ANDREW FAIZ

*My column* this month was inspired by Shawn Brouwer, of the Presbyterian church in Langley, B.C. He had sent in a People and Places submission and I noticed at the bottom of the email his signature stated, "Begin Anywhere."

I asked Brouwer about the phrase. He wrote, "Begin Anywhere is a phrase I picked up from Bono or Jeffrey Sachs (he wrote *The End of Poverty*) or maybe Bono quoted Sachs. (Not that I hang out with rock stars and economists ...) Or maybe they didn't say it at all, but they inspired me to adopt that phrase as a tagline. To me it means do something now. In the face of so many problems, challenges and choices (global, personal, in the church, on the job) it's easy to be paralyzed, to form study groups, to weigh options, to wait for something to happen, to deliberate and not act. And often my email correspondence is about a problem, challenge or choice. Begin Anywhere reminds me to do something—to do what I can."

I asked him if he would riff on the phrase and turn it into this month's Pop Christianity column. To which he replied: "I'll leave it up to you ... begin anywhere!" Thanks Shawn!

An internet search on the phrase takes it to John Cage, the avant-garde composer, who is supposed to have said, "Not knowing where to begin is a common form of paralysis. Begin Anywhere."

One of Cage's most famous pieces is called 4'33"—or four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. Any musician can play this piece on any instrument; the instruction is not to play the instrument at all for the duration of the piece. This might sound silly



ONE OF CAGE'S MOST FAMOUS PIECES IS CALLED 4'33"—  
OR FOUR MINUTES  
AND THIRTY-THREE  
SECONDS OF SILENCE

but I was at a performance where Cage "performed" this piece and it was a profound experience. Cage began with nothing; for four and a half minutes we went deeper and deeper into that silence. It was nothing and it was everything. It wasn't music in the expected sense, but it was a transformative experience of the immediate environment. It was spiritual, in the best sense of that now severely weakened word.

You either begin anywhere or wallow in a self-imposed paralysis—that seems to be the option. That is, paralysis is not an option since one can begin anything at any point. You feel overwhelmed by the needs of the world and your own sense of inadequacy—buck up, kiddo, who doesn't? Jump across this magazine to the Moderator's column and you'll read the stories of a few children who started their own foundations in their own small ways.

Or flip through myriad back issues

and read the stories of churches who turned themselves around by doing something small. By starting mid-week community dinners. By opening job centres. Or day cares. Or community gardens. By doing things—and this is very very important—that won't necessarily fill the pews, but will bring the immediate community into the church and the church into the community.

Like Cage's experimental composition, it is about listening to what is; listening to the immediate environment. The secret is not to fill some empty space—and we all got plenty of that on Sunday morning—but ourselves. Begin anywhere; begin by listening and follow what you hear with some small act.

And that small act will beget another small act—and soon you will find yourself suddenly excited by your faith. Not burdened by it, not guilted by it, not shamed by it. And it is that excitement, you will find quite miraculously, that will begin to fill the pews. The paralysis is not in the faith; it is in us. A paralysis of ossified culture, of smugness, of been-there-done-that-barely-made-budget-but-if-we-cut-all-the-evangelizing-programming-we-can-afford-to-keep-the-church-doors-open-for-another-year.

Don't take it from me: Take it from Shawn. His People and Places submission was about the 11th anniversary of a festival of music in Langley, where a variety of choirs get together and raise the roof, from Beethoven to Hank Williams. (See it online this month.) You know something that magnificent had to begin somewhere. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.



## Cooking Up Controversy

A CONVERSATION WITH MARGARET SOMERVILLE. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

WHILE SHE DOESN'T actively cultivate a career of controversy, Dr. Margaret Somerville's track record with the media belies the truth: during a particularly prolific four-month span, the ethicist, Samuel Gale Professor of Law, professor in the Faculty of Medicine, and founding director of McGill University's Centre for Medicine, Law and Ethics was mentioned by the media more than 13,000 times.

"If it's measured by how much you're in the media, than I guess I'm controversial," she says with a smile in her voice.

Somerville will be the headliner at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering to be held next May in Richmond Hill, Ont. And despite (or perhaps because of) her controversial viewpoints, the event's organizers are hoping Somerville will be the big draw—and will challenge and inspire the women who attend.

As an author, regular contributor to the *Globe and Mail* and the online independent news site, The Mark (where she tackles questions on abortion, maternal health benefits, and religion and public policy), Somerville has had the luxury of voicing her oft-criticized opinions. A nomination to the Order of Canada was reportedly declined because she was "too controversial," and her honorary doctorate from Ryerson University was met with disdain by some, thanks to

her criticism of same-sex marriage.

She admits she didn't start out as conservative as she is now—saying her views towards same-sex marriage, male circumcision, and gay parenting were once much more liberal. "It used to be that if you were radically liberal, you were labeled as controversial. But today, if you say anything traditional, you're regarded as controversial."

Somerville spoke with the *Presbyterian Record's* senior writer, Amy MacLachlan, in July. Below is an excerpt from that conversation:

**PRESBYTERIAN RECORD: What led you to create the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill?**

**MARGARET SOMERVILLE:** It started with the growth of modern applied ethics and bioethics. When the first heart transplant occurred in the late 1960s [1967] by Christiaan Barnard, the world was really stunned. The heart was the symbol of life—you were alive if it was beating, and you were dead if it wasn't. For the first time, there was a live person walking around with the heart of a dead person. We were astonished with that. It was also a time when a lot of people were abandoning religion, and we were recognizing that multicultural, pluralistic societies were growing. We also saw individualism and secularism expanding.

Ethics in medicine has a universal impact. It doesn't have the usual bound-

aries of rich and poor, north and south, though today that's becoming more common, and we've become more conscious of it lately. It raises very serious ethical problems, and people are talking about it now—about how to provide a standard health care level for all people.

So the Centre was a space to explore those issues.

**PR: Do you consider yourself controversial?**

**MS:** I'm labeled as controversial. There are people who seek controversy for publicity, but I don't seek it out. Sometimes controversy comes at a pretty serious cost to myself, and there are times when I think this is too hard, that I can't do it anymore. But I try to speak with integrity and to certainly speak what I believe. I have a policy to not sign any letters or to be part of any group, but to always act as an individual. I'm not saying that being part of a group is unnecessary; it's good and people must do it. But for me, no one can say, "Oh, she's saying that because she's a member of whatever." If I say I believe it, it's because I believe it. Not because I'm part of a group. That's not to say I won't change my mind. I will; I have changed my mind on several issues such as infant male circumcision and gay parenting. I'm less liberal now. As I've found out more about these things, and as I've become acquainted with people who have been harmfully affected, I speak out



to try to prevent those harms before they happen. We can use ethics to do that.

**PR: Are people today afraid to stand up for what they believe in, especially if that position is based on faith values?**

**MS:** They are afraid—and have reason to be—but that shouldn't be an excuse not to do so. This talk of being politically correct and tolerant of everything, well, they're tolerant unless you disagree with their viewpoint.

[Because of voicing my opinions] I've had to have bodyguards, a kidnapping-proof car. It's a bit James Bondy!

I have been given a huge number of honours, and I am deeply grateful for them. So I have felt like I have the freedom to speak, without a lot of risk to my professional life. But that's not true for a lot of young people. I've had young academics come up to me and say, "I agree with you, but I would never, ever have said so." They risk not getting tenure, or losing their job. It is a huge danger in our universities today.

All voices have the right to be heard, and to be heard with respect.

**PR: We hear so much about how Western society is secular, but is that really the case? Does religion influence much more than we realize or want to admit?**

**MS:** I've been to Europe three times in the last seven weeks. In Europe, there seems to be a revival of more traditional values. It remains to be seen where we're going. I would have said five years ago, we were in for an intense

secularism, but now I'm not so sure. It's kind of like TV. When you have it, you don't appreciate it, but when you lose it, there's a huge hole. I think we miss religion. Maybe not religion in all its traditional forms, but the way religion functioned and what it gave us, and our loss of ability to find shared values. We have to find ways to do that. That's what religion did for us before.

I think they might be weaved all together. That's not to say all faiths will conflate and become one thing; they will still exist as separate strands, but our experiences of sharing a common reality will come together, so no matter where we come from, we can agree that something is moral or immoral. Maybe we won't do something for the same reason, but we should agree that's what should be done. Too often we start from where we disagree, but we should start from where we agree and move towards where we disagree.

**PR: Do right and wrong even exist without religion?**

**MS:** That's an excellent question right now. I believe that everyone is spiritual, whether or not they are religious ... Genetically, we've got receptors for spirituality, but they need to be activated by an environmental trigger.

One of the big questions today, and it is one of the big divisions in ethics, is between the moral revisionists (such as Peter Singer, a professor of bioethics at Princeton University), the atheists, who say there is no external compass of right and wrong. There is only a personal decision of what is right and wrong, stem-

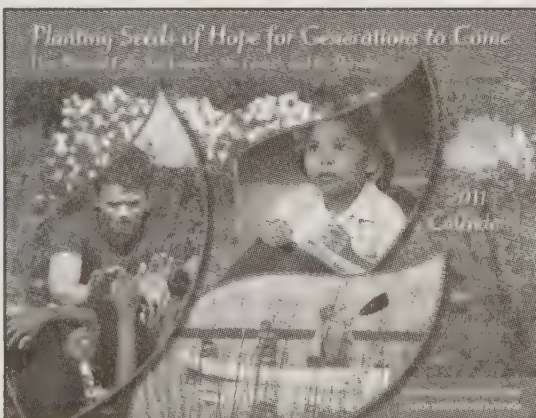
**“I'm a principle-based ethicist. I believe there are rights and wrongs based on a supernatural reality; that from that comes a natural law and natural morality”**

ming from the question of does it create more good than harm? If an action creates more good, then it's right. If it creates more harm, then it's wrong. But I don't believe that. I'm a principle-based ethicist. I believe there are rights and wrongs based on a supernatural reality; that from that comes a natural law and natural morality. There is a truth quite apart from any we can construct.

I'm working on all these questions, and getting into a lot of trouble! McGill keeps track of how many times their professors are in the media. During a four-month period, I was in the media 13,600 times. The next highest academic in Canada was mentioned 6,200 times or so. How do you measure controversy? If it's measured by how much you're in the media, than I guess I'm controversial.”

To read more from Margaret Somerville, contact the WMS Bookroom for her publications. ■

*Amy MacLachlan is the Presbyterian Record's senior writer.*



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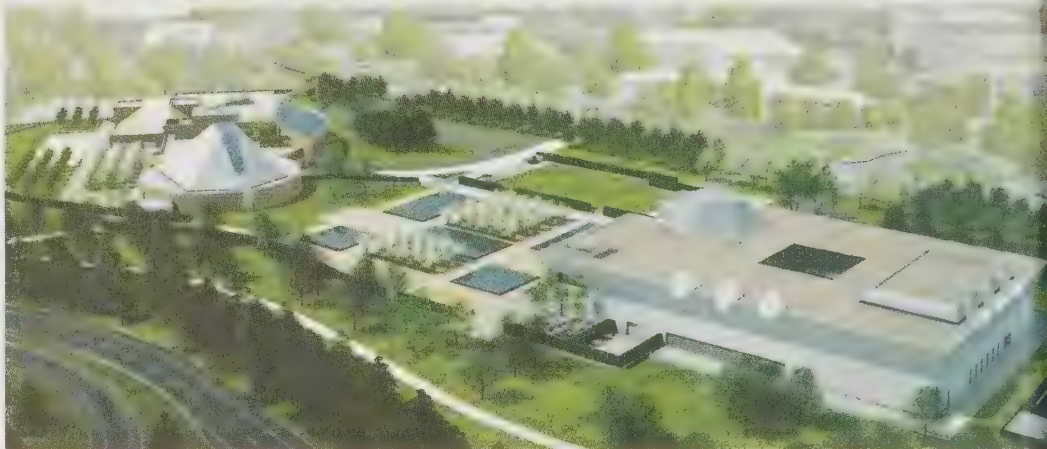


# Community News

## New Neighbours at Wynford

A \$300-MILLION Ismaili cultural centre is now under construction across the street from the Presbyterian Church's national offices in Toronto.

Construction began in earnest on May 28 when the Aga Khan, leader of the Shiite Muslim group, attended a ground-breaking ceremony alongside Prime Minister Stephen Harper. —C.Purvis



An artist's rendering of the Ismaili cultural centre, museum and gardens.

## Quebec's Presbyterian Bill

UNDER A BILL adopted by the National Assembly of Quebec in June, Presbyterian College, Montreal, has been authorized to grant Master of Divinity and Master of Theological

Studies degrees under its own charter. Previously, the college granted such degrees in partnership with the Montreal School of Theology.

Presbyterian College remains affiliated with McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies and the Montreal School of Theology, and will continue to run its Master of Divinity program conjointly. —C.Purvis

"We are very aware that there are people in our community who are hungry—students that are hungry as well," said Rev. Ron Fischer. "We are here and we care."

Loaves and Fishes, a separate food distribution program in Nanaimo, operates out of the church building, and takes advantage of St. Andrew's volunteers. Together, they serve about 35 adults and 15 to 20 children weekly.

St. Andrew's Food Voucher program provides \$50 vouchers from local food marts to assist families in need.

Four new programs are being launched this September. Music for Tots and Music for Kids will offer weekly doses of music and drama. A

## Caring for the Community

ST. ANDREW'S, NANAIMO, B.C., is rediscovering its connection to the community. The congregation feeds about 100 people twice a month—about 80 of those are students from the high school across the road.

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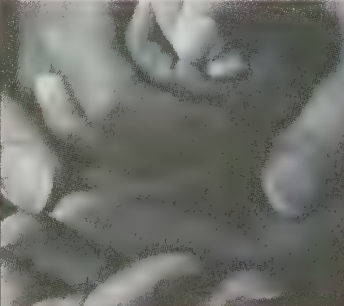
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financial management course, and the Dynamic Marriage ministry offers hope for a stable family life. "Happy families are generally more resilient to the storms of life, which makes for better communities. What better results can a church pray for than that?" asks Fischer. —*St. Andrew's, Nanaimo*

### Taiwan Honours Minister

REV. CHIUN-CHIA (Paul) Tong was named Outstanding Alumnus by the Taiwan Theological College and Seminary on June 18 during the convocation of the 2010 graduating class.

Tong said he is humbled by the award and wishes to share it with his wife, Suzie for being responsible for half of his ministry. He dedicates the award to the many Canadian Presbyterian missionaries who went to Taiwan since the 18th century, starting with Rev. Dr.

George Leslie MacKay, who founded the seminary.

Born in Taiwan, the 80-year-old Tong now lives in Vancouver, following an international journey of ministry and missionary work. Upon his seminary graduation in 1955, he ministered for 10 years at various Presbyterian churches in Taiwan. In 1965, he was installed as an overseas missionary by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and served at a Presbyterian church in Singapore until 1969. In 1970, he immigrated to Brazil and founded the first Chinese Christian Church in Rio de Janeiro. He moved to Vancouver in 1980, and served at various Chinese churches in Vancouver and Richmond, B.C., until being accepted into the Presbyterian Church in Canada two years later. He then became the Presbyterian chaplain at the Anglican-run Missions to Seamen. He retired

in 1995, but continued part-time ministry at that mission until 2000.

He will make his way to Rio de Janeiro in October for the 40th anniversary of the church he founded in 1970. —*A.M.*

### First Regent College-VST Grad

THIS SPRING, the first student enrolled in a joint Master of Divinity program graduated from Regent College, armed with a diploma from the Vancouver School of Theology, and a degree from Regent.

Richard Watson is the first to take advantage of an initiative to mesh courses required for ministry in the Presbyterian Church with the program offered by the more evangelical Vancouver seminary.

Previously, students who graduated from Regent would be required to take 15 additional courses—which were usually spread over a year and a ➤



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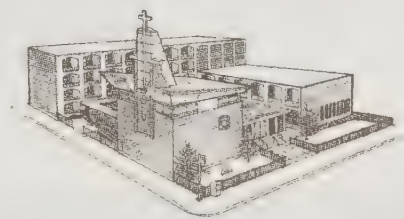
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## UPDATE Kortright Finishes Renos

AN \$800,000 BUILDING renovation is finished at Kortright, Guelph, Ont. The federal government provided funds through its community adjustment fund grant (with the congregation kicking in an extra \$39,000), enabling major repair work on the roof, heating system and interior spaces.

Kortright's suburban neighbourhood lacks a school or community centre, so the renovations mean a safe, updated space is available for social and support groups, youth activities and sports.

In thanksgiving, the church is making a donation to Habitat for Humanity.

The former school building is where the founding members first met back in 1980. The congregation purchased the building in 2005.

Kortright has another reason for thanksgiving: Rev. Alex MacLeod will be joining the congregation Nov. 1 as lead minister. MacLeod served at Knox, Spadina, Toronto, for 14 years. —A.M. with files from Kortright

half—at one of Canada's three Presbyterian colleges before they could be accepted as ministers in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The requirement has been a constant source of frustration to students, according to Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, dean of St. Andrew's Hall, VST's Presbyterian college.

The concurrent program is aimed at alleviating some of that frustration; students can take Presbyterian-specific courses at VST and count the credits toward their Regent degree.

"In practice, we are talking about a little over three years of study in total rather than four and a half years," Farris said. "A student in the joint program receives a thorough grounding in the evangelical understanding of the Christian church and also exposure to the theology and practice of the PCC as a whole." —C.Purvis

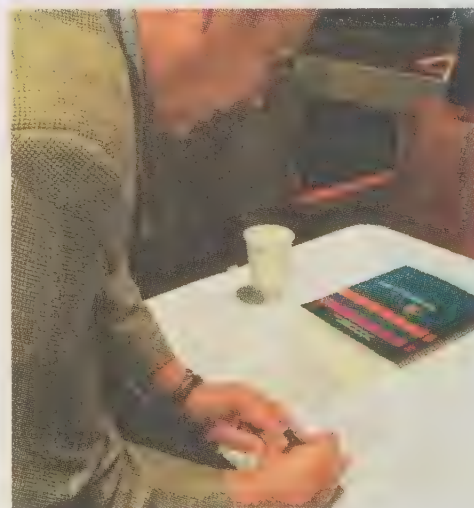
### WCRC is Born

ON JUNE 18, 80 million Reformed Christians from 230 denominations were joined together as the World Communion of Reformed Churches was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

At a 10-day international conference, leaders pledged unity in the pursuit of justice, peace and healing around the world. Two previously independent bodies, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches—which included the Presbyterian Church in Canada—and the Reformed Ecumenical Council amalgamated to create the WCRC.

Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of the PCC and a member of the WARC executive, signed a statement of commitment on behalf of the church.

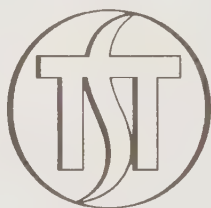
Another Canadian Presbyterian, Rev. Mary Fontaine, head of Hummingbird Ministries in B.C., was elected to the 22-member WCRC executive committee. —C.Purvis ■



Rev. Stephen Kendall signs the new WCRC commitment statement.

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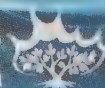
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# Calvin is My Homeboy

## And other internet oddities.

BY BRADLEY CHILDS

### HIP-HOP CHURCH

The House is an urban teen-oriented, non-denominational church in Chicago and is an extension of Lawndale Community Church. The House sees itself as a missionary experiment within the U.S. hip-hop community and as its guiding principle, it cites God's call of Ezekiel to peoples whose language is known to him. The church serves around 500 teens in a service where all of the music is either hip-hop or rap.

**FIND IT @** [thahouse.org/index2.html](http://thahouse.org/index2.html)

### WEBSITE

While the popular flash cartoon series homestarrunner.com is not specifically Christian or even religious, I think it's worth a look. Particularly of interest is Strong

Bad Emails where Strong Bad (a crazy self-centred Mexican wrestler) answers viewer emails and mocks people's grammar. Trust me; it's funnier than it sounds.

**FIND IT @** [homestarrunner.com](http://homestarrunner.com)

### BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

**2 Kings 9:20 NRSV**—Apparently Montreal isn't the only place with crazy drivers. "Again the sentinel reported, 'He reached them, but he is not coming back. It looks like the driving of Jehu son of Nimshi; for he drives like a maniac.'"

### REFORMED CHRISTIAN KITSCH

From zazzle.ca comes a nice assortment of John Calvin clothing. Where else can you get a "I put the 'T' in TULIP" or "Calvin is my homeboy" t-shirt? Or maybe you

need one that reads "Calvinism: When a finite God just won't do." Or perhaps, just perhaps your dog really needs a "John Calvin and Thomas Hobbes" sweater. (P.S. They've got mugs, ties and shoes too!)

**FIND IT @** [zazzle.ca](http://zazzle.ca)

### BOOK

*The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus.* It is not often that I stumble across such an excellent book. From the professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, comes the unique perspective of Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. Though I can't say I agree with everything in this book, what I can say is that it can certainly help expose many of the poor assumptions Christians often can't help but make while reading the Bible outside of the original Jewish context.

**FIND IT @** [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca) ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*



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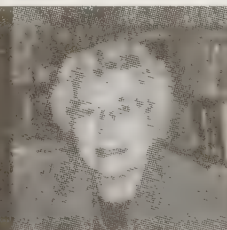
**What flavour of ministry would you like to support?**

### A real life example:

In 1994, Giollo Kelly acquired a \$10,000 gift annuity which she designated for the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation. When she died fifteen years later, Giollo had received nearly \$11,000 (87% tax-free) in total payments and left a legacy of nearly \$7,500 with the money remaining in her annuity account.

(The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Annuity rates and the residue available for disbursement vary.)

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# World News

## Ordaining Homosexual Clergy

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has approved a measure that could allow those in committed same-sex relationships to be ordained as clergy.

The proposed change to the denomination's policies must still be approved by the church's 173 presbyteries. In 2009, 94 of the local bodies voted against the change following a similar decision by the 2008 assembly.

Proponents of the measure said the move is a historic step that puts the Presbyterian Church on the right side of history.



G20 security on King Street, Toronto.

The denomination, meeting for its 219th assembly last July, also debated whether to broaden its definition of marriage to include people in same-sex relationships, but the assembly voted to maintain the traditional definition.

Lacy Morris, a delegate to the assembly quoted by the Presbyterian News Service, said the church had to decide which was worse: possible division or failing to do what was right.

"We're talking about history, but we need to talk about the future," Morris said, noting that the ordination of women also risked divisions, but had proven to be the right decision. —ENI

## G20 No Problem for PCC

ST. ANDREW'S, King Street, Toronto, was about as close as one could get to the G20 meeting in June. But despite being in the midst of the frenzied security and violent protests, the church opened its doors for Sunday morning service—without any problems.

Rev. Will Ingram thanked the 40 or so worshippers who navigated the security barriers, reporting that no damage was done to the building. From the pulpit, Ingram used the global leaders' meeting and the violence that had erupted around it to demonstrate the need for a God-led community in the midst of injustice.

"On both sides of the fence are

dedicated people who are aware that we are confronted with profound challenges," Ingram said in his sermon. "Regardless of these differences, it is only fair to acknowledge that people on both sides of the fence—and those who are looking on—know that the present state of the world is not as it should be."

The witness of St. Andrew's did not go unnoticed, and was reported on by the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and a local community newspaper chain.

Several organizations supported by the PCC also responded. Kairos led a cross-Canada tour featuring international speakers, who discussed how climate change is impacting daily life in their countries.

Kairos' official statement called on the media to give attention to the stories of people whose lives are affected by the G20's actions—stories "that may help our country make decisions of hope that build a more just and peaceful global community."

The Canadian Council of Churches hosted the World Religions Summit, where interfaith leaders from the G8 nations gathered to discuss their concerns. "At the summits in 2010, we expect leaders to put first the needs and values of the majority of the world's population, of future generations and of Earth itself," notes the interfaith leaders' statement. "From our shared values we call on leaders to take courageous and concrete actions." —A.M.

## Churches Must Help Fight AIDS

FAITH LEADERS can play a key role in the fight against the HIV pandemic if their public statements help combat stigma and discrimination, a meeting of faith groups in Vienna in advance

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# The Healing Begins

SURVIVORS FINALLY TELL THEIR STORIES. **BY PETER BUSH**

of the 18th International AIDS Conference has heard.

"Public positions and statements of some faith-based organizations have at times been unhelpful, or even harmful," the Netherlands AIDS ambassador Marijke Wijnroks told a multi-faith conference in July. "Deeply judgmental comments ... have alienated people at risk and contributed to stigma and discrimination."

The conference was organized by a working group convened by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Life and Mission Agency, attended the meeting as chair of the EAA.

"I was amazed at this conference to see, meet with and listen to the children of the HIV generation," he told the *Record* in an email. "These people, born HIV positive, are now young, articulate people who are asking about their lives." —*ENI*

## Food Aid Reform

SEVEN COUNTRIES, including Canada, and the European Union previously promised to provide about five million tonnes of food aid each year to countries in need. However, the Food Aid Convention—the name of the international agreement—is in need of change, and after several years of delays, the member countries have agreed to begin negotiations on reforming the convention, hopefully by this December, and concluding by June 2011.

To help guide the reform, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank initiated the Trans-Atlantic Food Aid Dialogue, a coalition of North American and European NGOs that will draft proposals for change.

Issues such as rising food prices, climate change and its effects on food availability, and national budget restrictions—all of which impact not only developing countries' access to food, but wealthier countries' abilities to provide food aid—will be part of the reform process. —*A.M. with files from CFGB* ■

THE FIRST NATIONAL EVENT of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began with great expectations as hundreds of people gathered round the sacred fire at the Oodena Celebration Circle at the Forks in Winnipeg. A pipe and drum ceremony along with Christian prayers in Cree, French and English set the stage for the sharing of stories.

Hundreds more joined the official opening as Justice Murray Sinclair, lead commissioner of the TRC, reminded those gathered that the purpose of the four-day event was to hear the full range of stories that came out of the residential school experience—the bad and the good, the horrific and the funny. Students, teachers and staff, and anyone else who felt impacted by the schools, were invited to tell their stories. While many of the former students (often called survivors) are now seniors, the stories are from their childhoods. The commissioners use this reality to define their mission: "We do this for the child taken and the parent left behind."

The Presbyterian Church's moderator, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, was present, and all four churches that operated residential schools (Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United) were represented, and provided lunch for 1,200 people during the event.

Over the 160-year history of the Indian Residential School system in Canada, approximately 130 schools were operated under the auspices of the government and the churches. Prior to 1925, the PCC operated nine schools. Five of those schools became the responsibility of the United Church in 1925, leaving the PCC with Cecilia Jeffrey at Shoal Lake and later Kenora, Ont., and Birtle, Man. The federal government took over complete control in 1969, closing

the last school in 1996.

Through rain and wind and threat of tornado, the stories were told. In public listening circles, 150 former students told their stories to the commissioners. Another 275 told their stories privately to statement-takers and video cameras. Nearly 1,000 former students registered their presence at the event; an estimated 500 more attended but chose not to register.

In the interfaith tent, the churches spoke not only their sorrow over their participation in the schools but also of what is being done to support healing and reconciliation. During sharing time, a former student was given the microphone. With a huge smile on her face, she began, "I am free. Yesterday I told my story to the commissioners. It is the first time I have told my story. Last night it felt like a weight had been lifted from me. I forgive you all. I am free."

The event also enabled non-aboriginal people to learn about the schools, to bear witness to the stories told, and to experience aboriginal culture. About 5,000 people visited the learning tent with its poster displays of the schools and hundreds of photographs. The photos were a powerful draw for former students hoping to see themselves, siblings and friends.

The rain ended overnight Friday; Saturday dawned clear and bright. Justice Sinclair commented that it was as though creation itself was weeping over the stories told and was cleansing the survivors with its tears.

At the closing ceremonies, the entire assembly held hands as the drummers led a traveling song. With fireworks, the first national event came to an end. ■

*Rev. Peter Bush is minister at Westwood, Winnipeg.*





Israeli soldiers confront Palestinian villagers during a raid on the market in Hebron.

# ‘Because I See Hope’

A YOUNG PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATES FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BY LAURA ASHFIELD

ONE OF MY FIRST MEMORIES as a child is from the Holy Land. My parents were studying at Tantur (an ecumenical institute for theological studies located right between Bethlehem and Jerusalem) for a few months in 1989. All I really remember as a three-year-old were the abundant sheep and the shepherds on donkeys, whom I would point to and yell, “Look! It’s Jesus!” every time I saw them. I must have seen at least 15 of these Jesus look-alikes!

Since I was three, my concept of the Middle East has of course broadened to more than just the cute, fuzzy animals and the birthplace of Jesus. I’ve been back twice, participating in the Sabeel Young Adult Conference in the summer of 2008, and in the Gaza Freedom March just this past December and January. During the conference two years ago, I learned about the complexities of the occupation of Palestine by visiting refugee camps, meeting with Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and government officials and spending time with youth from Israel and Palestine. I travelled extensively throughout Israel, the

West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. While I was on this trip, my eyes were widened to the realities of the situation in the Middle East and I was completely appalled by the acts of oppression and occupation that I observed. During my time in Hebron visiting the Christian Peacemaker teams, I witnessed a village raid. Four 18-year-old Israeli soldiers came into the old city of Hebron, heavily armed. They closed the market down, threatened the locals and detained two young Palestinian boys standing right beside me. I was enraged. After the soldiers went back to their posts I spoke to one of the store owners. He told me that the soldiers do this sort of thing every day

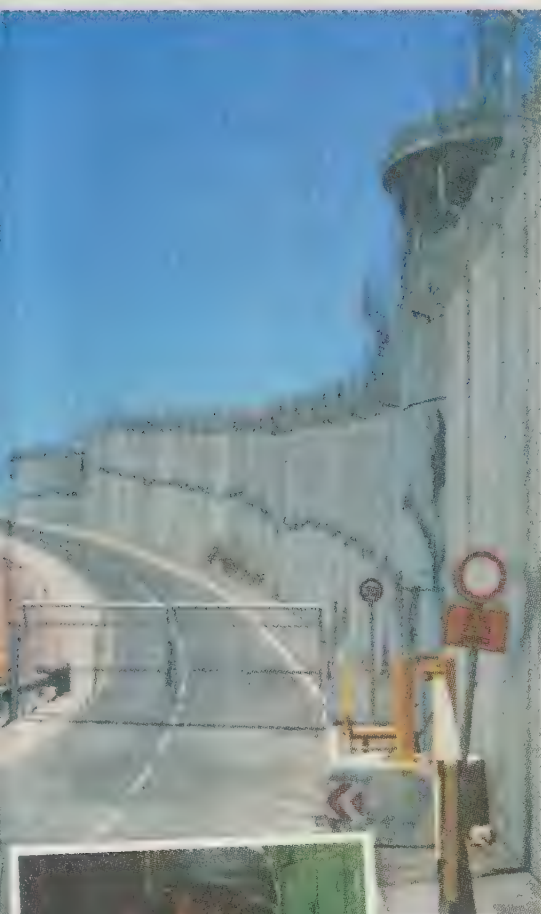
in Hebron just to assert their power, and then he asked me to do him a favour. He spoke little English, but it was clear that he wanted me to tell the world what I have seen. He asked me simply to tell the world his story and I promised him that I would.

There was a shift in my focus when I returned home from the summer. Keeping in mind my promise to the man in Hebron, I did presentations on the conflict to youth groups, churches, universities, Bible studies and wherever anyone would listen. My new focus was to educate people in North America about the situation in Palestine/Israel in order to create awareness and provide a different representation

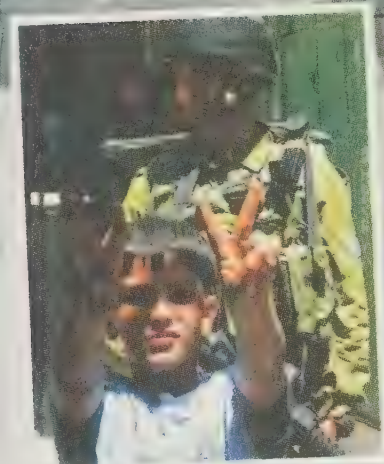
## For more on peace efforts in Palestine:

- To learn more about Sabeel, an ecumenical Christian Palestinian organization, visit [sabeel.org](http://sabeel.org)
- For information on how to buy and support fair trade Palestinian olive oil visit [zatoun.org](http://zatoun.org)
- The Gaza Freedom March: [gazafreedommarch.org](http://gazafreedommarch.org)
- Christian Peacemaker Teams: [cpt.org](http://cpt.org)
- Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies: [tantur.org](http://tantur.org)





The security wall.



A Palestinian boy and Israeli soldier.

of the conflict. I also started selling fair trade Palestinian olive oil out of my home and started going to protests and rallies, seeking out other activists who were also passionate about peace in Israel/Palestine.

This past Christmas I was given the chance to participate in the Gaza Freedom March, run by an organization called Code Pink. The purpose of the march was to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Israeli bombings, to call worldwide attention to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, and to show the residents of Gaza that the international community has not forgotten them. There were about

1,400 internationals there, hoping to get into Gaza through Egypt with school materials, medicine, water purification systems and other much needed supplies. Unfortunately, the Freedom March did not go as planned. The Egyptian authorities had closed the Rafah border into Gaza, cancelled our permits and buses and made it impossible to carry out anything as planned. Because we couldn't get into Gaza we protested in Cairo. Obviously I was disappointed I didn't get into Gaza for a second time, but I believe it was important to be part of an initiative like the Gaza Freedom March. Whether it took place in the Gaza Strip or in the streets of Cairo, it brought thousands of internationals together in one place in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

After the events in Cairo, I headed back to Israel/Palestine to reunite with my friends and meet with Sabeel and other peace organizations. On a bus ride from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, I saw Tantur again, the magical place of sheep and donkeys I remembered from my childhood. Much had changed since I was three. You don't see any sheep or their shepherds anymore. Instead, all you can see is a giant concrete wall complete with barbed wire and lookout posts surrounding one side of Tantur, separating Jerusalem from Bethlehem and the rest of the West Bank. This is called a security wall by most Israelis, but is a catastrophic separation wall for Palestinians. It separates people from their farms, churches, mosques, hospitals, schools, friends and family. It is only one aspect of the occupation that Palestinian people have to deal with every day along with checkpoints, the permit system, settler violence, and Israeli military control. Like I said, much has changed.

After one of my presentations someone asked me why I advocate for justice for Palestine.

My answer was this: I advocate because voices are silenced. Because people are living under occupa-

tion everyday and oppression has become a normal way of life. I advocate because the media does not tell the truth. Because everyone seems to have opinions on the conflict but the controversial nature of the subject leads to misguided opinions and snap judgments. I advocate because I've seen Palestinians and Israelis working tirelessly for peace. I advocate because I see hope. ■

*Laura Ashfield is a recent graduate of the Global Studies program at Wilfrid Laurier University and is a member of Knox, Waterloo. She just completed eight months working with Project Ploughshares as the Presbyterian peace and human security intern and is currently working on organic farms and community gardens in British Columbia.*

### St. Giles Presbyterian Church Calgary, Alberta Minister



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If you feel that you are called to explore this opportunity, please contact the Interim Moderator for additional information.

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Letter from Haiti



# The Long Road to Recovery

REBUILDING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS AFTER 40 SECONDS OF DISASTER. BY ALEX MACDONALD



Claudette Auxin sells limited items after her store was destroyed by the earthquake in Haiti.

"OUTSIDE HELP is necessary for us. I need you to tell my story."

I sat with Claudette Auxin under a mango tree to escape the searing heat at the edge of Place St. Pierre in the heart of Petionville, a suburb of Port-au-Prince. Claudette now calls this town square home.

Port-au-Prince is a city transformed by the devastation unleashed at 4:53 p.m. on January 12th, 2010. In Haiti, I quickly learned that the specific hour and terrifying 40 seconds of convulsing earth, collapsing buildings and lost lives is seared into the minds of absolutely everyone left to talk about it.

As a Presbyterian World Service and Development program coordinator, I visited Claudette early on a Saturday morning as part of a nine-member international team tasked with taking stock of what the Action by Churches Together Alliance has accomplished in Haiti since the earthquake, and to make recommendations on future steps. The team and I were very impressed by the

work of our Haitian partner organizations and their success in helping to meet the essential needs of people affected. But despite five months of work, it's obvious everywhere you look that many people are still living in crisis.

Claudette is 51 years old, living under a plastic tarp wrapped around wooden poles erected by her son. She is one of hundreds of people packed into the town square in a makeshift tent city. There are a few latrines on the road beside the plaza, as well as some shower stalls. Everyone living in the camp fears the uncertainty of their future—rumours of forced eviction mean not knowing where their future homes may lie.

A select few, including Claudette, are better able to meet some of their basic needs through support from PWS&D and the ACT Alliance. She has received two months' cash assistance (US\$65 a month), and will receive four more. The money is helping her restart her business buying and selling candies,

batteries and snacks, though she's now reduced to selling from her tent.

When the earthquake hit, Claudette was at home with her daughter, chatting in the living room and playing with her granddaughter. Her son was soon to arrive from work. The house began to shake violently, and terror paralyzed them. Claudette's daughter grabbed the child as the two-story house next door collapsed, crashing into their living room, burying them both under concrete and iron. A pole smashed into Claudette's shoulder, breaking it, before continuing on to destroy her left knee. But Claudette was the lucky one. Her daughter and granddaughter were killed by the falling rubble.

Wracked with pain, dulled only by shock and disorientation, Claudette was pulled out from the rubble by her son, who was in the street when the earth trembled. He managed to carry her to a hospital. Thousands of people clamoured for help and care, but eventually, she received surgery that reconstructed her shoulder and knee by inserting pins to hold the bones together. The ACT Alliance provided her with a walking aid.

Despite the loss of family, property and livelihood, Claudette, along with hundreds of people living with disabilities in the Port-au-Prince area, are thankful for support and solidarity in these uncertain and terrifying times.

With the cash assistance and her profits, she is able to purchase food for herself and her son. She is slowly accumulating funds to keep her business stocked. Life is beginning to re-emerge, and the long road to recovery has begun. ■

*Alex Macdonald is program coordinator for the Americas at PWS&D.*





**Theology 101:**  
Where in the World is God?

## Spiritual Presence

GOD IN THE CHURCH. BY EMILY BISSET

*IF YOU ARE LOOKING* or listening or watching for God in church, you may well find God in the words, the liturgy, the order of service, or the music. But the presence of God often becomes palpable in worship in the moment of silence after the choir anthem or a wonderful hymn, with the last note hanging in the air. The

presence of God is in the silent spaces in the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, after words of thanks or a plea of concern are uttered. The presence of God is in the pauses between transitions in a sermon when everyone shifts just slightly and the Holy Spirit whispers an “aha” to someone in the congregation. The presence of God ➤

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## The Spirit is a channel, a bridge, a connector. Through the Holy Spirit, we are brought into a mystical union with Christ

is in the intake of breath before the call to worship, and the exhale just after the benediction before anyone moves.

Ultimately, the answer to where God is in worship is one of mystery. That may not be terribly satisfying until we also understand that the mystery of God's presence in worship is synonymous with the ultimate mystery of life. This is not mystery in the sense of a whodunit, so much so as it is about something bigger than us, greater than us, beyond us, and yet it is the key to understanding ourselves, this world, and the ultimate purpose of all life. The mystery of God's presence is perhaps the keenest when Christians gather around the table of the Lord. To those outside the church it is perhaps the most peculiar moment in a worship service. For many inside, it is the most sacred, though we might be hard pressed to explain why.

Perhaps I am drawn to John Calvin's theology of communion because I am a middle child. I admire the way that Calvin read the scriptures, looked at the controversy being played out around the holy sacrament—between the Roman Catholic tradition, the emerging Lutheran tradition, and the Anabaptist interpretation—and came through with a truly middle way. Calvin wasn't really seeking a middle way in terms of a compromise. He was rather seeking an answer to the question, "How is God present in the sacrament? Where does God show up?"

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the technical term is transubstantiation. When the priest consecrates the elements, there is a moment in the

mass when the bread is transformed into the actual body of Christ. In the Lutheran tradition, the technical term for understanding how God shows up in communion is consubstantiation. Christ is present in the elements in a mysterious physical way. However, the elements are not changed entirely in their substance. Somehow, like the understanding of a person who is simultaneously both a grievous sinner and yet fully justified, the elements remain wheat and grape while at the same time becoming Christ's body and blood.

Both Calvin and his more radical counterpart, Ulrich Zwingli, took issue with any reference to the bodily presence of Christ in the elements. One basis for this argument was the account of the ascension of Christ in Luke and Acts. If Christ ascended to heaven, as we read in the scriptures and attest in our creeds, then Christ's body is no longer to be found on the earth—in any form. The human body of Jesus, so essential to the incarnation, is no longer available to people of faith. Nor, would Calvin argue, is it necessary.

Protestants influenced on this subject by Zwingli took this concept quite literally. For Christians in this tradition—today represented mainly by Baptists—this meant that the celebration of the sacrament is a memorial to Christ. This tradition emphasizes the final part of the words of institution, "Do this in remembrance of me." In partaking of the bread and the cup, Christians are remembering Jesus Christ and the Last Supper. Somewhat like a memorial service for one we love or as a community on Remembrance Day. There is reverence and reflection. There is certainly a richness to this memory like no other and it is vital to the church. But, at its heart, it is a memorial and nothing more.

Calvin was not satisfied with this interpretation either. Something profound was still missing. Christ is present, not as a memory, but in

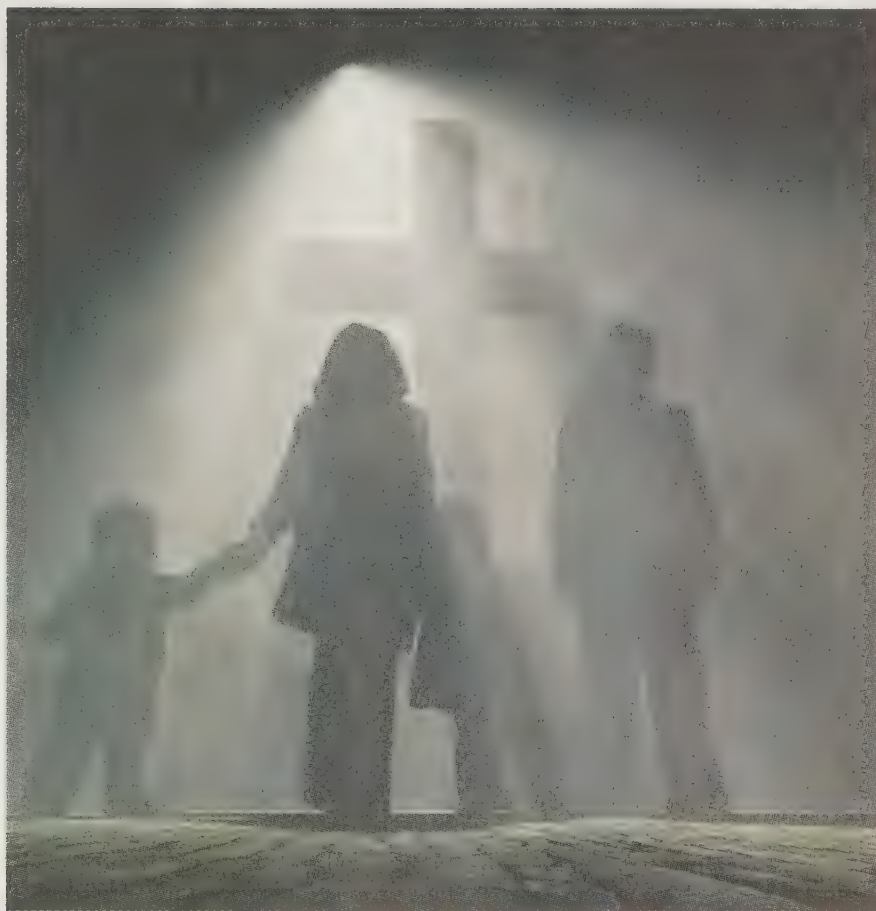
a real way. The remembering that we do in communion is unlike any other kind of remembering in human experience. We are not remembering something past. We are remembering something and someone that is still happening and who is still here, not gone from us at all. The sanctuary is thick with the real presence of Christ when the sacrament is celebrated. This presence of Christ is palpable but not physical. The physical human senses can perceive this presence, and yet the elements do not change. Bread remains bread. The fruit of the vine remains juice. Nothing changes and yet everything changes. The difference is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit brokers the presence of Christ. The Spirit is a channel, a bridge, a connector. Through the Holy Spirit, we are brought into a mystical union with Christ. This is the Reformed understanding of the sacrament of communion. Christ's presence is real and through the sacrament we are united to Christ in a mysterious yet actual way. So it is, also, with all of our worship. God can be found woven into words and silence, under and through Christian fellowship, inhabiting the praise of God's people. It would be arrogant to believe that we are the ones who start and stop worship. Though we have a starting time for worship and an ending time (a pretty strict one for Presbyterians!), it would be better if we thought of worship as an ongoing activity. We neither begin it nor end it, rather we join in for a while and step out for a while. And when we step out, it is only to renew our quest to find God in the midst of our lives, work and play beyond the sanctuary. Indeed, hopefully each time we join in the practice of worship, we will emerge inspired, nourished and better equipped to sense God's active presence in all areas of our lives. ■

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*Rev. Dr. Emily K. (Rodgers) Bisset is minister at Knox, Oshawa, Ont.*





# Ties That Bind

THE THINGS THAT KEEP US FROM CARRYING THE CROSS. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

September 3, 2010 reading

15th Sunday after Pentecost  
Luke 14:25-33

One of the books I refer to when I'm teaching an introductory course in pastoral ministry is called *Family Ties That Bind*. Not to be confused with Erma Bombeck's "It's funny because it's true" book *Family—The Ties That Bind ... and Gag!* The first book is about self-awareness and growth through what's called "family of origin work." In light of today's gospel it seems both

authors, Ronald Richardson and Erma Bombeck, are right. Family ties tie us down, bind us, even gag us. Jesus calls us to break all bonds. "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple."

When Jesus says, "hate," he doesn't mean "despise." He means, "turn away from." He means, "leave behind." We don't like those words. He goes on to speak of carrying the cross. That tells us two things. These words were written down after the cross became the central symbol of Jesus' life and work. These words spoke

to the life and mission of his disciples a generation after Jesus travelled the countryside with his first followers. If we only imagine Jesus saying these things to those first disciples, we have to picture them scratching their heads. We have to hear these gospel words echo among the first congregations of the church—the church Luke wrote for. In that context these words give meaning to the struggle and loss, the hard choices so many who followed this new Way had to make.

Through Luke, Jesus speaks here to people who have already paid the high cost of discipleship. Jesus says, "If you still cling to what's behind" ➤



## We know many of our ancestors in faith left a lot behind. Not always by choice. Many who still had stuff shared it freely with their sisters and brothers in the new household of faith

you, you can't be my disciple. If you're weighed down with what was, and not able to carry the full weight of my mission, you can't follow me."

I don't suppose we like those words any better! What have you or I given up for the sake of our discipleship? What sacred things have we turned away from in order to follow Jesus? What thing of real value have we sacrificed so we could take up the cross? We may happily hate the TV preachers and their gospel of prosperity. But our idea of the good life is closer to Joel Osteen, in his astro-dome church than to Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his cold prison cell. We like

to think there's a righteous medium between excessive wealth and dire poverty, joyful prosperity and suffering sacrifice.

Jesus doesn't think so. Apparently, the only balance he's concerned about is how the cross rests on our backs. I don't like this any more than you do. After all, you and I hold, and are held, by a lot more than the first and second generation of disciples ever were. Jesus' words helped them see loss as gain. We're not likely even to think of losing anything for Christ's sake.

"So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions." We know many of our ancestors in faith left a lot behind. Not always by choice. Many who still had stuff shared it freely with their sisters and brothers in the new

household of faith. Leaving behind, letting go, and passing around were late first-century acts of discipleship. What early 21st-century cognates can we creative preachers come up with on Sunday morning?

What do you and I depend on to sustain our sense of identity and worth? What do we trust for security in life? Is it where we were born, and to whom? Bank balances and retirement plans? Things we have, do, and are that mark us as mainstream, majority, normal? The tight circle of people we love, and who love us? None of these is evil. None of these will last. Any of these can tie us down, bind us, and even gag us. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*

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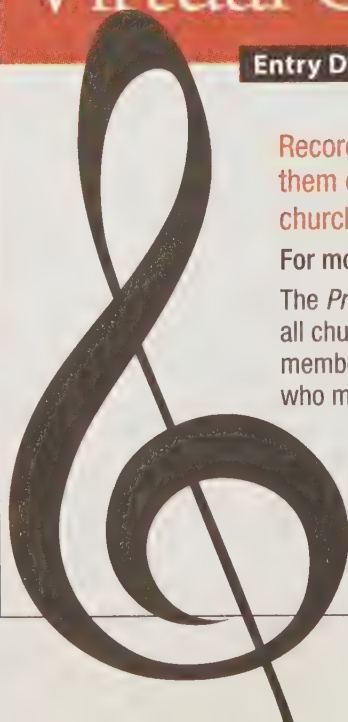
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# Recipe for Success

BURLINGTON EAST GROWING AFTER AMALGAMATION. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

**N**ot all amalgamation stories have a happy ending. But Burlington East Presbyterian, located west of Toronto, has seemingly discovered a recipe for success.

"There were a number of ingredients that came together to make it work," said Rod Wilkinson, who came to Burlington East after the amalgamation. He is now an elder there. "I think people have to be hungry for change, and be willing to reach out. They have to be equally willing to accept new leadership and direction."

The new congregation did just that. They embraced their interim minister, Rev. John Cruickshank, hailing him as a God-send who knew exactly how to mix the ingredients together; they began searching for mission opportunities in their own backyard and saying goodbye to old ways of doing things.

"They took a risk and a leap of faith that the new congregation could grow and become something separate from the past," said Wilkinson.

The process began in 2005 when a small group began to dream of new beginnings. They envisioned six struggling congregations in Burlington and nearby Aldershot, Ont., abandoning their buildings and joining together in order to find new life. For various reasons, one church dropped out, two others didn't want to participate; then Aldershot closed and amalgamated with Waterdown. Two were left—Pineland and Strathcona, located about five kilometres apart.

Strathcona was struggling finan-

cially, and Pineland had severe growth issues. "This building was plain run down," said Strathcona (and now Burlington East) elder, Gord Fielding. "There were between 25 and 40 people left at Strathcona. There was a sense of helplessness. We went bankrupt. We had the hydro shut off. Financially, it was done. And when the mega-church idea fell through, the heart fell out of this church. It was the only light they could see. They were desperate."

At Pineland, they voted to join the regional church idea with enthusiasm—a last attempt to keep witness alive.

And so, a year after the first amalgamation attempt fell through, the two congregations decided to make a go of it. After a building inspection, it was decided that the Pineland location would be sold, and the congregation would move into the Strathcona building. The amalgamation happened on Jan. 1, 2007. Renovating the existing facility immediately became a priority, making Pineland members feel at home as opposed to being guests in a foreign setting. It also helped Strathcona members lose any feelings of possession.

"If you're not going to a brand new premises, you have to change the feeling of the one you're continuing with," said Fielding.

Lucky for Burlington East, the Pineland building was sold quickly in a cash sale, creating funds for the renovations—something members refer to as "part of God's will." When the scaffolding came down in the new sanctuary last November, a collective sigh was heard in the congregation.

"We thought, 'Now we are Burlington East,'" said Fielding.

The feeling of one, seamless congregation was repeated over and

over among members.

"We're a congregation where people are working very well together," said former Pineland member, Stephen Shields. "When we joined together, we were two factions, now we've just about eliminated those factions. People are coming from the other two congregations who didn't come at first, and new people who belonged to neither. But it feels like a single, unified body."

"There are so many new people now, and I don't think they can tell that we used to be two congregations. We're one church now," said Janis Chadwick, a former Strathcona member. "We're part of the same team."

Just about everyone will say the success is largely attributable to Cruickshank, a minister well-versed in helping congregations through transitions, who came to the church about a month after the amalgamation.

His policy of follow-up phone calls to visitors has been key to not only a seamless amalgamation, but to ➤

## Recipe for Amalgamation Success

- many meetings to identify potential problems
- an open, adaptable session willing to work in new ways
- new leadership
- a sensitive, forward-thinking interim minister
- a dedicated, committed congregational community willing to accept direction
- new or totally renovated building
- a focus on mission and outreach
- faithfulness to God's plan for the new church



growth. Fielding related two stories where members were gained simply because of a phone call—something that numerous other ministers during their church-shopping had failed to do.

Wilkinson agrees. "People were outwardly welcoming. They invited me to sit with them. They made the transition very, very enjoyable. This was very quickly followed up by a visit from John. That was it. I was hooked.

"He's a great promoter of the life of the church, and the people in the congregation. He engages you. You can't help but be swept up."

The original ministers of both congregations moved on at the time of amalgamation.

"It became obvious that the charges had to be vacated," admitted Fielding. "I don't think it would have worked otherwise. In situations like this, ministers have to be prepared to move on; they have to get out of the way."

Numbers have increased to an average

of about 144 attending each Sunday. A Christmas Eve service attracted nearly 300. Young families have been the largest addition, with 45 families added in the last three years, including 27 kids under the age of five. In 2010 alone, they've added four new families.

"Not only have the remnants come alive, and become excited, but there is growth in new members," said Cruickshank. "We've gone from two struggling congregations to one vibrant one."

Members say something spiritual is going on, and that feeling is extending into outreach. Before the amalgamation, the congregations were too downtrodden to look outward—indeed, they didn't even know poverty existed in the picturesque west-of-Toronto suburb. But two years ago, two women in the church decided to start a Christmas dinner for disadvantaged people in the community. Last year, 35 volunteers helped out, on Christmas Day no less, and 43 kids from the local school

who otherwise wouldn't have had a Christmas received special Christmas packages from church members.

The desire to reach out and be a true helping hand in the community has become a major part of the congregation's identity, and is an endeavour they want to grow.

Cruickshank's term was over in August and the congregation is looking for someone who places a high priority on visitations, and is willing to reach out to the community, to those in need, and to young families.

"The challenge now is to find someone who will take it to a higher level, and to the next stage," said Fielding.

"It's amazing what's come out of two dying congregations. It's not a revival, it's a renewal. Spiritually, something is happening here." ■

*Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.*

# NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S GATHERING 2011

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# PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2010 Edition, Issue 3

ABRIDGED  
VERSION



## Supporting Life through Livestock



**A**CCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, approximately 70% of the world's 1.3 billion poor live in rural areas, and of those about 600 million depend on livestock as part of their livelihood. For many marginalized people, livestock is one of the few means of breaking free from relentless poverty, giving animals an important role in rural poverty reduction strategies.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) agrees that owning livestock offers a promising opportunity to combat poverty, however most livestock policies and services tend to favour large-scale production. Small farmers and herders need access to basic services and technologies, such as veterinary care, grazing lands, as well as policies that take account of their needs.

PWS&D is working to help small-scale farmers around the world through livestock programs that go beyond just providing animals, but also teach farmers how to provide adequate housing, access veterinary services and ensure their animals are properly fed and cared for. Working through local partners that are able to engage the entire community, livestock programs are helping provide new sources of income, nutrition and opportunity.

### Investing in the future

From the largest cow to the smallest baby chick—there are many benefits to keeping livestock for families in need. Perhaps most important of all, livestock are an investment. For many people, animals represent savings and the sale of livestock and manure can be crucial ►





income during hard times. The profits from livestock and their many products—such as milk, eggs, meat, wool, leather and honey, can help poor families access enough food, improve their nutrition, send their children to school and purchase medicine.

Beyond the financial benefits of owning livestock, animals can help reduce the need for human labour by carrying heavy loads, ploughing fields and providing a means of transportation. Their manure fertilizes the soil, and most livestock graze on unusable materials such as hay, grass, kitchen scraps and other waste, converting them into high-quality food for people.

The dietary benefits of livestock are important to families consuming meals that are often limited to a small number of grains. Meat, milk and eggs add a valuable source of protein that can have dramatic effects, particularly on developing children and pregnant women. As well, there are social benefits that livestock can provide. When women own livestock, their social status can be improved, empowering them to participate in decision-making, while also increasing their sense of accomplishment and self-confidence.

### Guatemala: Progress through pig farming

In the western highlands of Guatemala, many indigenous people are struggling to overcome deep-rooted poverty and years of civil war. PWS&D is working to help families have new hope for the future through agriculture programs that focus on adding vegetables to diets for more nutrition, improving crop yields and establishing small-scale pig farms.

Thanks to the dedication of PWS&D's local partner ASDENA (New Dawn Association for Health and Community Development), over 130 families received a pig last year to help launch their businesses. New pens were constructed and the community worked together to ensure the success of all members. With guidance from ASDENA, the families were able to raise their animals for sale at market. The money was an

important addition to household incomes and helped provide more food, supplies, clothing and ensured children could stay in school.

Many families used a portion of their new income to purchase another piglet as an investment and continue their farm. The program continues to add participants, improve pig facilities and provide training in proper feeding and care. The pigs are growing up healthy and strong, and the whole community is proud of their success.

### Malawi: A land flowing with milk and honey

In northern Malawi, PWS&D is responding to prolonged poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation. Working through local partners, PWS&D is helping to establish seed banks to provide food during the hungry season, organize village savings projects and plant trees. The program is also providing livestock for income-generating initiatives including bee keeping, fish farming, raising dairy cattle and rabbits.

These initiatives have become highly successful projects for many families, providing crucial sources of protein, milk and honey to diets heavy on corn intake and helping families access more funds for the household.

With the support of local partners overseas, and with the generous support of Canadians, livestock programs are working at a grassroots level to help people from developing countries replace scarcity with opportunity. To learn more, visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd).

**Did you know?** Most people in the world eat 1-5 food items every day: rice, wheat, cassava, potato or maize to which a small amount of vegetables, meat, fish or sauces may be added. Compare that to the over 30,000 food items we can choose from at the average grocery store.

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# Chaos and Sustainability

FINDING THE PERFECT BALANCE IN YOUTH MINISTRY. BY MATT FOXALL

I had been joyfully co-leading youth ministry in Kitchener, Ont., with my wife, when the unexpected happened. I began to feel that God was leading me away from my comfortable place to head out into something new, unknown, and perhaps even chaotic—to spearhead youth ministry with another congregation. I was terrified to leave the church that I had grown up in, where we had seen substantial growth with a spiritually committed group of young people who made doing youth ministry every week a joy. But the feeling was undeniable—I was being called away. This other congregation had not been able to get youth ministry off the ground the way they had wanted to. Their youth ministry was in need of an overhaul.

I remembered a book I read many years earlier, *If You Want to Walk on Water You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. It was time for a leap of faith. I trusted that God had another special plan in store for all of us.

When I took the charge at St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont., it was difficult, at first, to plan any kind of programming with the sporadic attendance of less than five kids. The expectations were high—and my past experience so different. I realized programming wouldn't be the starting block, so I got to work simply getting to know the kids and their families. In the meantime, I started to read up on how to get youth ministry off the ground. I picked up a book called *Sustainable Youth Ministry*. The author, Mark DeVries, goes into detail about the "roller-coaster" trend churches fall into with hiring youth leaders: the new "superstar" leader is tasked with the overwhelming mission of resurrecting the ministry—but generally with a limited (or nonexistent) volunteer base, and limited resources. The result: leader burn out. In less than two years the church is seeking a new youth leader and the cycle starts again. Dismounting this "roller coaster" involves crafting a vision for youth ministry created and endorsed by the church, empowering volunteers, and an

appropriate budget to make youth ministry sustainable. I was hooked!

I passed the book on to others, starting the process of creating sustainable youth ministry. We formed a group (comprised of youth, volunteers, parents, session members, and the minister) to craft a vision for youth ministry, complete with a mission statement, values and achievable long-term goals (with yearly benchmarks). Volunteers were called and equipped as they found their place in youth ministry. Programs began to spring up that were in line with our values and goals. Attendance stabilized, and grew! The ministry began to unfold naturally.

While youth ministry is crazy and fun, there is an unshakable sense of shared purpose and vision in our ministry. Since beginning this process, our numbers have tripled, our programs have increased and more importantly we now have about a dozen committed volunteers.

Being called out of my comfort zone changed my life. It has been a great discovery about the nature of chaos in ministry, and the importance of creating sustainable foundations. More importantly, it was a moment of personal growth in faith. I love leading youth ministry, and am grateful for the community of faith in Guelph. It has been a life-changing experience I will never regret. I hope God finds no reluctance in me the next time I am invited to step out of the boat!

St. Andrew's, Guelph, will be hosting the Shift Youth Ministry Leadership Conference on September 17-18, 2010. This conference is an excellent and affordable way for you to empower your volunteers and youth ministry professionals. The plenary speaker will be Mark DeVries. For more information please visit our website at [experienceshift.ca](http://experienceshift.ca) or call 519-822-4772. ■

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Matt Foxall is director of youth ministry at St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont.



# Theology & Action

## 2010 Rayner Prize

**Rev. DeCourcy Rayner** was the right man at the right job at the right time. A minister and a journalist, he helmed the *Record* through the turbulent 1960s and '70s. His magazine never shied away from the times. And, he wasn't always loved for it.

Rev. Dr. Roberta Clare, now of St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver, knew him in her undergraduate years at the University of Toronto when she was editor-in-chief of the campus newspaper, which Rayner had run many decades earlier. "He was a maverick in his time at the *Varsity* and we shared the dubious honour of being editors who were threatened with impeachment. DeCourcy encouraged me to keep writing and was delighted when I began

to write for the *Record* in the 80s."

Armour Heights church in Toronto has a fund in Rayner's name with the purpose of encouraging the Church's seminarians to think and write in a popular way for a general audience. In short, to do for others what Rayner did for Clare.

This legacy is worked out through a contest. The *Record* staff concocts a question which students at the three colleges—Presbyterian College, Montreal; Knox College, Toronto; and, St. Andrew's Hall—are encouraged to answer in the form of a short magazine article.

This year the participants were asked to meditate upon two letters published in

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Emily Carr, Indian Church, 1929 © Art Gallery of Ontario



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the *Record*: WWJRead, by Adrian C. van Draanen, March; and, Concerned about the *Record*, by Rev. Doug Swanson, February. Both can be found on the *Record*'s website or in past copies.

Submissions were adjudicated by van Draanen and *Record* staff. (Swanson was regrettably not available to participate.) Of the winning entry van Draanen wrote, "It caught my attention right away and it held my attention to the end. It uses short sentences and easy to understand

and appropriate illustrations."

The other two entries are available on [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca). The session of Armour Heights will send generous cheques to the participants.

As always, thank yous are due to the participants (two from Knox, one from PC) and the college staff for distributing the contest. To Armour Heights for their financial generosity. To DeCourcy Rayner for his legacy. And to van Draanen (who was very generous in his time and efforts

to adjudicate) and Swanson and others who engage in a (sometimes heated) conversation in this magazine every month. Or as one of the entrants wrote, "That these letters would be written, published and written about again is a testament to the democratic values that make the PCC a place where people with a spectrum of views can share God's grace and work together to create good news stories that will hopefully grace the pages of future editions of the *Record*."—Andrew Faiz

## Winning Entry

# On Track

ACTING OUT OF LOVE. BY SCOTT FLEMMING

**I**n order for us to stay "on track" as faithful Christians, I think it's important for us to often ask ourselves who we are and why we are here. Judging by recent letters to the editor from Adrian van Draanen and Doug Swanson, it's once again time for self-analysis.

Although the contributors did not ask or answer these questions directly, I think their comments about the state of the Church today come from their implicit responses. For instance, van Draanen wonders whether Jesus really cares about what Presbyterians discuss, or if he's more concerned with their actions. On the other hand, Swanson seems to earnestly believe that God cares that God's truths are written about. So, on one side, we have a picture of the Church as the metaphorical hands and feet of Christ, chiefly meant to physically carry out the commands of Jesus; while, conversely, we have a belief that the Church is the metaphorical mouth of Christ, primarily designed to share God's truth.

Over the years I've tried to explore both options in hopes of finding out how to do Christianity "properly." I've worked with underprivileged youth, helped out at food banks, chatted with homeless people on the street, donated money, recycled everything I could, minimized my purchases, and even tried to be nice to people I didn't like. I've also often racked my brain over difficult theological questions, trying to "get to the bottom of things" so I could tell people the "truth" and how to "live right"

so they would see God. Needless to say, all the effort required to do and to think "right" has burned me out.

The thing about the above understandings of Church is that they don't fully incorporate our humanness. The tasks of eradicating poverty and discovering ultimate truth sound more fit for machines than persons, and I think that's why many of us burn out. So what then is the Church?

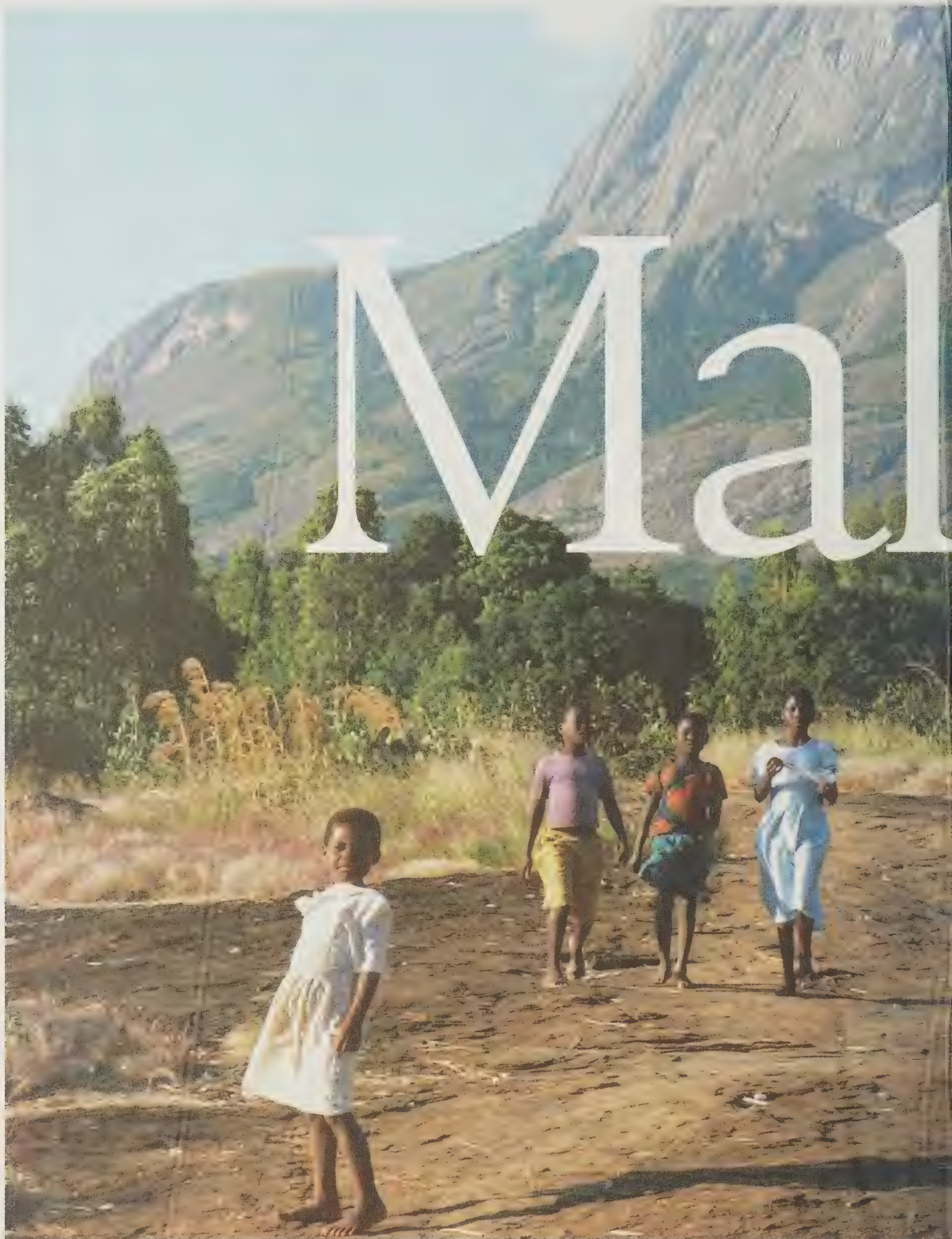
Actually, perhaps we had better ask, who is the Church? I believe the Church is the bride of Christ, and that her great task (or commandment) is to love Jesus with everything she has. Consistent with van Draanen and Swanson's views, this will very often look like outreach and theology. But in addition, it will also look strange. Being Jesus' bride means being a group of people who are totally infatuated with their lover. This might mean doing all sorts of foolhardy things for the love of God: speaking up for unpopular truths, inviting losers to parties, and living far below our means. The strangest thing is, if we do all of these things out of love, we will not burn out, but actually enjoy ourselves!

So to respond to the letter writers, I would say that if we understand ourselves primarily as Jesus' bride, then we will no longer first ask, "What should we be doing better?" or "What should we know more about?" but "What can we do to get as close to our lover as possible?" ■

*Scott Flemming is a student at Knox College, Toronto.*



# Mal







# Hawaii

## A Youth Mosaic

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CONNIE PURVIS



# Youth in Mission:

It's a three-week whirlwind tour; a glimpse into the people, places and partnerships of Malawi's Church of Central Africa Presbyterian and Canada's Presbyterian Church. It brings together nine Canadian youth, most of them veteran camp counsellors, and five Malawian youth from various presbyteries in Blantyre synod.

Most of the stops involve visiting or playing with children—unsurprising since over half of Malawi's population is under 18. But most of the children met are orphans; in Malawi this means they have one or no surviving parents.



YIM team members: Violet Magwira, 22, and Eden Gaskin, 19.

St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Blantyre, Malawi



## This

hall is used to hold church services for young people," Rev. Paul Mawaya says as he gestures beyond the historic church to a building shaped like a crown and topped with a cross.

St. Michael and All Angels', with its walls and windows warped by time, holds six services each Sunday to accommodate about 7,000 worshippers.

Over 97 per cent of Malawi's 15 million people are under the age of 65; 80 per cent are Christian. The church here is young, and it is strong.

"There's always a struggle with youth in the Malawian church," says Mawaya, head of Blantyre synod youth. "In synod, presbyteries, congregations, at all levels they want to do something. What you're going to find is there's a lot of energy from our youth."





A grandmother sits outside her home near Mount Mulanje.

“The hardest part is because of poverty,” says Eneles Chaononga. “Guardians think it’s tough to look after this orphan. That they can’t manage. We sit down and say, ‘You are in this world to help these children. God will give you power.’”

“The children are left to look after themselves to get money for clothes. They get pregnant. They marry very young.” In her time at Likhubula House, four girls from the orphan care program have dropped out of school because of pregnancies, she says, suggesting some exchanged sex for money.

“When they are an orphan they say, ‘Because I’m an orphan I can do nothing.’ But we want to take that heart out of them and say, ‘You are God’s children. You can do something. You can be something. You can change your situation if you just finish your education.’”

Seven years ago, following the death of her husband, Chaononga came here to live in an orphanage at Likhubula, which has since become a dorm where the visiting Canadian and Malawian girls sleep. The church now supports the children’s guardians, allowing the orphans to live in homes.

Most of the orphans’ houses have only one or two rooms, almost no furnishings, and no electricity. But in the villages near Mount Mulanje, grandmothers offer “ground nuts” or peanuts and cassava to their light-skinned “*azungu*” visitors—tokens of generosity offered to those who represent wealth in one of the world’s poorest countries.

“I’ve found it’s easier for people who have money to say money is not attached to happiness,” 23-year-old Mike Birks later observes as the youth reflect on the experience. “Money means something else, apart from what it means in Canada. It means health and status.”

Eneles Chaononga shows off sewing and embroidery done by the orphans.







The Lewis family: Ester, 9, Commander, 16, Gift, 12, and Naomi, 9. Fyness, 13, is not pictured.

Commander Lewis is 16, and with the death of his parents two years ago, he became the head of the household and guardian of his four younger siblings.

They manage to scrape by, renting out one of two houses his father built in the densely populated township of Ndirande. Commander admits food and clothing are a struggle, but he does so hesitantly. He doesn't want to complain, he says in Chichewa, since a CCAP program is providing funding for his secondary school education.



Calista Kasiya, 78, and her granddaughter Violet Alumando, 4.



Two orphans learn tinsmithing at "Saturday school."

## Death

is an ever-present reality in a country where about 12 per cent of adults are infected with HIV. Although it has long been considered a problem for the poorest, transient and vulnerable members of society, according to Malawi's National AIDS Commission, current HIV prevalence rates are highest among the wealthiest in society, and among those with post-secondary educations. And infection rates are related to marriage; those who are married or are seeking to be married run a higher risk of infection. This means youth, especially young women, are particularly at risk.

Although there are many reasons for infection within a stable relationship, two predominate: sexual infidelity and one partner keeping his or her status a secret.





Children at Likhubula House's "Saturday school" program.

A sense of incredulity hangs in the air as the Canadians introduce themselves to young leaders in Malawian churches. Most of the Canadians come from congregations too small to be called "congregations" in Malawi. Those from Malawi, on the other hand, hail from churches with youth groups larger than most of the Canadians' congregations.

"Why?" the Malawians ask. Why are your groups so small? Why don't you just invite others to come?

The discussion weaves through aspects of Canada's culture: of secularism, of the belief that faith is a personal matter, and of a stigma against proselytizing. But the young people gently and firmly hold each other to account. Ultimately, many of the Canadians would later admit, it was simple discomfort—even fear—which kept them from talking openly about their faith in their own country.

"I felt I was blaming other hypocritical youth in Canada for things I do myself," Eden Gaskin, 19, would later admit. "I don't go to church every Sunday. I'm not as interested if there's no youth, and it's hard to break into a new youth group. It's easier to back away."

"If I'm called to be the light, but I run away to join my fellow light—if I run away from the so-called darkness—who will be the light in that darkness?" asks Bayana Chunga, founder of Wings of Hope Malawi and a faith columnist in the *Sunday Times* newspaper. "There is so much in the Presbyterian system that's better than the Pentecostals. Better systems and theology and such, but I think it's our attitude that's wrong. It's like you are a fellow worker with God. You have to work."

Bayana Chunga addresses the group.







The Canadian youth walk some orphans home.

The YIM team.



It was a commission that echoed through the long trip home. As the Canadians approached security at the airport in Blantyre, the Malawians who journeyed with them began to sing across the gulf between them. "Farewell, farewell, but not forever!" ■

online extra

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AND A TRIP BLOG, VISIT  
[PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)



# Walking Humbly

A CANADIAN'S REFLECTION.

BY SARAH SMITH

I spent days researching and learning as much as I could about Malawi and mission trips. I read countless articles about the dangers that mission trips pose to developing nations—about how North Americans run amuck preaching, offending, and taking away jobs with construction projects that could have employed several local workers. Even with this information, I felt called to go to Malawi on a Youth in Mission trip.

Reflecting now, I see how much more “mission” is. A mission trip today is a partnership. This was never as evident as when five Malawian youth joined us for the first 10 days of our trip. I learned songs and games and shared laughter with them, but was changed when they demonstrated their faith.

During Bible study one night, Madalitso Pangani sang us a song that he sings to himself when he needs comfort. It consisted of three simple phrases: Alleluia, You are Holy, and You are Worthy, yet they silenced our entire group and reminded us of God and all that God is.

While helping with some physiotherapy at Tidzalerana Club, which supports people with disabilities, one young girl, Maria, became attached to me and another of the YIM participants, Natalie Brown. After spending our afternoon with her, I overheard her mother say to Natalie, “You have made Maria so happy.” I spent that evening wondering if the happiness Maria experienced even came close to matching the happiness she gave to me.

I am not sure if our Malawian counterparts learned and grew as much as I did, but I am certain that in every situa-



Sarah Smith and students from Apatsa Private Primary School.

tion I learned something from them. Micah 6:8 says, “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Although I do not have a definite conclusion about my experience, what I do know is this: We are all God’s children; and the act of being there, learning from, and partnering with is what mission means to me. I will never cure HIV/AIDS, or provide a home to every orphan or vulnerable child living in Malawi. I cannot end gender discrimination or stop crop failure. What I can do is this: I can act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with the Lord. I can pray ardently for the people of Malawi. I can take the stories I have heard and the experiences I have been a part of back to my home congregation and the people around me and together work for change. ■

*Sarah Smith, 19, lives in Abbotsford, B.C.*



# Thanking God

A MALAWIAN'S REFLECTION. BY CAROL GAMUTI



Mike Birks and Carol Gamuti.

It was on May 5, 2010 that we expected our friends from Canada, but when we got to the airport we didn't know what to expect. We didn't know what they would be like. But now the trip is over, and it has been like an undreamed dream come true. It has changed us spiritually, intellectually and physically, and has also given us opportunities to

visit places in Malawi where we couldn't afford to go.

It is a dream of every Malawian youth to see Likhubula House near Mount Mulanje. Here we played games from Canada and also from Malawi that were taught by some of the orphans that came to visit us.

In life there are challenges that one faces, but the part that made my heart sick was when we went to Apatsa Private Primary School. There we found the happy poor kids who were busy dancing; a lot of them are orphans and some have HIV. It was just as difficult to bear the sight of those who were in beds struggling with disease in Mulanje Mission Hospital while we moved freely like birds in the sky. I find that to be something one has to thank God for.

In every story there is the saddest part and the fun part, and climbing Mount Mulanje was the most fun. I had not even dreamed of one day climbing the mountain, but now we can say more about it and encourage our fellow youth to do the same.

I and my fellow youth are happy with what these Canadian youth have done. We have learned a lot that has helped our lives; it was really youth in mission. ■

*Carol Gamuti, 17, lives in Blantyre, Malawi.*

## Battling the Cynical Side

SEEKING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT. BY MIKE BIRKS

As an international development graduate from Trent University, I was looking forward to seeing firsthand some of the development projects supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development. I initially chose my major because I thought it would teach me how to help those suffering from poverty; what I experienced was a deconstruction of everything I considered "development" to be, and a growing skepticism of everything being promoted as "development." I graduated with few firm beliefs about the subject, a general cynicism and

a lack of faith in humanity's desire to help one another.

This trip to Malawi was encouraging, helping to diminish the sense of futility I felt. I have been able to see the genuine effects of people caring about and helping one another, which can still occur within the highly problematic and often destructive development industry. Everywhere we went, people were being placed at the heart of development.

Beyond the programs we visited, the trip itself meshes with the development aims of the church. It created no

illusions that we had come as experts in some capacity. It was organized to expose us and teach us about pertinent issues here so we can share what we've seen with our congregations at home. This, I feel, is one of the most important roles we can play as Canadian youth with limited education and expertise. While I now have many more questions in my mind than when I left Canada, I have also had some questions answered (which is not something I had been expecting). ■

*Mike Birks, 23, lives in Waterloo, Ont.*



# HMS Generosity

ALL ABOARD! BY HERB GALE

**DURING ASSEMBLY I** invited commissioners to sail with me into the future God is preparing for God's people on a ship I christened, Generosity (see my blog for June 18 at [presbyterian.ca/moderator](http://presbyterian.ca/moderator)).

I now want to extend that invitation to the children and young people in our church. To them I say, become crew members on the HMS Generosity, for truly you are the ones who can inspire us to climb on board and hoist our sails for places unknown. Your energy and fresh ideas and sense of adventure are contagious and exactly what we need to propel us forward.

Here are just a few stories that illustrate my point:

**Ryan's well**—In 1999 six-year-old Ryan Hreljac was inspired by his first grade teacher in Kemptville, Ont., to raise money to build a well to supply safe drinking water for children in Africa. After months of doing odd jobs and recruiting help from his schoolmates, Ryan raised enough money to build a well in Uganda. Eleven years later, Ryan is still actively raising money through the Ryan's Well Foundation to fulfil his dream of providing safe, clean water for every child in Africa. To date, the Ryan's Well Foundation has provided funds for over 600 water projects in 16 countries!

**Hannah's ladybugs**—While driving through downtown Winnipeg with her mother, five-year-old Hannah Taylor was shocked to see her first homeless man: "Mommy, why is that man eating out of a garbage can?" She began raising money to help the homeless by inviting

people to put their change into jars she painted to look like ladybugs, "because ladybugs bring good luck." Now 13 years old, Hannah has raised over a million dollars through her Ladybug Foundation and continues to spread her message that the homeless are "great people, wrapped in old clothes with sad hearts. Don't be afraid of them. Just care for them and be kind to them."

**Paige's cuddles**—When Paige Pedlar of Whitby, Ont., was six, she became so distraught after watching a TV show about children being left orphaned because their parents had died of AIDS that her mother had to cuddle her until she fell asleep. The next day, Paige wrote a book she entitled, *Who Will Cuddle Them When They Sleep?* to express her feelings in words and drawings. She has partnered with the Rotary Club of Whitby to sell copies of her book with proceeds going to the Cuddle the Orphans Project to raise money to combat HIV/AIDS.

**Peter's great Canadian cycling adventure**—On June 18th, Peter McLean began a 9,000 km solo bike trek across Canada as a unique "coming of age ritual" and to raise money for the Canadian Bible Society's Bike for Bibles program and for the Hakka Bible translation that his father, Rev. Dr. Paul McLean, has been working on for 25 years. (His mother, Mary Beth works at International Ministries at the church's national offices.) You can follow his efforts at [petermclean.tumblr.com](http://petermclean.tumblr.com).

I believe that Christ is calling the Presbyterian Church to embark on a voyage that promises adventures even



Rev. Dr. Herb Gale addresses the assembly.

greater than Peter's bicycle trek. Where our journey will lead us, I cannot say; but, I am convinced that it is only in the spirit of hopeful generosity we see expressed in children such as Hannah and Ryan that we will find our way forward. Like Peter's biking adventure, our voyage will require all the energy and imagination and courage we can muster. Thankfully, we do not make this journey alone. Christ is our guide and enabler, and we have many other shipmates for our voyage. And so I invite you today, no matter what your age, to join the crew of the HMS Generosity. Share your stories to inspire us along the way. And in the meantime, I ask you to pray along with me, "Come, Holy Spirit, come! Fill our hearts with your indomitable Spirit and fill our sails with your mighty wind!" ■

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herb Gale".

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving.

online extra

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# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## **Knox, Manotick, Ont.**

Rev. Dr. Adrian Aurret and his wife, Magda retired after 27 years in ministry. Knox, where Aurret served the past decade, had a Down East kitchen retirement party for them, which included step dancing, fiddle playing, singing, and dinner. Lisa MacLeod, M.P.P. for Nepean-Carleton, presented Aurret with a certificate on behalf of the Ontario Government.



## **Burns, Mosa, Ont.**

Rev. Harvey Self spoke at the 175th anniversary worship at Burns. He is seen here with clerk of session Ruth Ann McIvar, and interim moderator Michael Stol.

Our website has an article on the history of this church by Marie Williams-Gagnon; she also took the photographs.



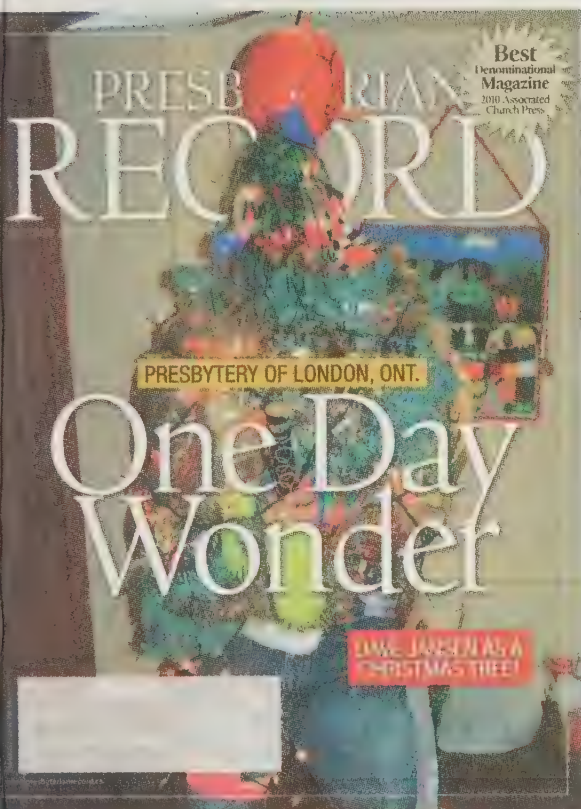
## **First, Brandon, Man.**

Brothers Daniel and Million Abebe and Deresse Ayalew are Ethiopian refugees from Kenya and Sudan, living in Brandon. They were sponsored by the mission-minded folks at First, Brandon. An Ethiopian Orthodox congregation has been meeting at First since 2002.



### Knox, Harrington, Ont.

Can you count the celebrations in this photo from Knox? End of June: so, completion of another Sunday school. Start of summer: so, kicking off the Kids Klub, a new youth program. And the red is in support of a local young soldier serving in Afghanistan.



### Presbytery of London, Ont.

In past years, Dave Jansen has been shaved, dyed and duct-taped to a wall in support of the Presbytery of London's annual youth One Day Wonder conference. This year he was decorated as a Christmas tree. The *Record* received a petition from the conference participants to put him on the cover of the magazine. Here it is!



### Knox, Calgary

A service celebrating Rev. Murdo Marple's 38 years of ministry of word and sacrament was held in June. Marple retired from Knox after 21 years of ministry. From left: Rev. Dr. Jean Morris, Rev. Dr. Cameron Brett, Rev. Murdo Marple, Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, and Rev. Victor Kim, moderator of the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod.

### online extra

**MORE GREAT STORIES ONLINE:** Rev. Clara Kim conducts the WMS's B.C. Synodical's AGM. The 11th annual festival of praise in Langley, B.C.—from Beethoven to Hank Williams. Knox, Georgetown, Ont., celebrates 150 years with many dedicated members. Rev. Harold Kouwenberg starts a new ministry at Ingleside, Ont. Rev. Dr. Jean Morris of Bethany Care Centre, Calgary, is honoured. The AMS helps PAW with cushions. Meryl and Don save a shed in Richmond Hill, Ont.



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905-892-4716; vasar@talkwireless.ca.

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Half-time; Rev. Steve  
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1V5; 519-245-2292; revboose@bellnet.ca.

Brantford, Central; Interim Moderator Joel  
Sherbino; 519-442-2842; joel@parispresb.ca.

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N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-221-4690;  
donpmccallum@wightman.ca.

Burlington, Burlington East; Interim  
Moderator Rev. George Beals, c/o  
Burlington East Presbyterian Church,  
505 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E3;  
905-575-5525; gbeals@mountaincable.net.

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time minister for two charges; Interim  
Moderators Rev. Amanda Birchall and  
Rev. Deb Dolbear-VanBilsen, c/o Glencoe  
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revdeb17@sympatico.ca.

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ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca.

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Dr. Garfield Havemann, c/o Chedoke  
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Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; 905-383-6012;  
ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca.

Hamilton, Heritage Green; Half-time;  
Moderator Rev. Stephen Jenvey, 262  
Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E1;  
905-628-6675; rev.steve@bell.net.

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All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: \$40 minimum for a one-time inser-  
tion or \$25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations.



## St. John's Presbyterian Church

10 Mountain Street, Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6

**is seeking a  
MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

who has a passion for God and His church, a vision for renewal, and leadership skills to energize the church family to accomplish God's purpose for us.

The congregation has chosen these areas of ministry to be our future focus:

- Relevant preaching
- Personal and spiritual development
- Crisis visiting, care and compassion
- Equipping members to integrate Christian faith with real life
- Sharing God's love in our communities

**If you sense that God may be calling you to St. John's, please contact our Interim Moderator:**

Rev. Dr. Garfield Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church,  
865 Mohawk Road West, Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9  
Email: ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca



## St. Andrew's Church in Sarnia

established in 1841, stands next to City Hall and has been a downtown city landmark for many generations - is seeking a full-time minister.

He/She will be enthusiastic and have a vibrant and energetic personality, someone who will guide and inspire us in our spiritual journey and help us to grow our presence in the community.

If this enthusiastic person sounds like you please contact our search committee chairperson - Doug Norcross - at [dknorcross@sympatico.ca](mailto:dknorcross@sympatico.ca) or call 519-332-2662 for more information and a copy of our Church profile.

In prayer, we look forward to hearing from you soon.

## Bethel Presbyterian Church

Ilderton, Ontario

**is seeking a  
part-time minister**

As a small but faithful group of disciples who strive to serve and honour our Lord, we require a good shepherd to guide and encourage us on our journey. The best of both worlds, Bethel is situated in the heart of the agricultural south-west on the perimeter of London, Ontario.



If you are interested in leading our flock, please contact:

The Rev. Kathy Fraser, interim moderator, at [kfraser001@sympatico.ca](mailto:kfraser001@sympatico.ca) or Carl Crossett, clerk of session, at [ccrossett@quadro.net](mailto:ccrossett@quadro.net)

## ST. ANDREW'S KING STREET TORONTO is seeking a A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE MINISTER

St. Andrew's downtown context is rich in opportunities for members, including youth, to grow in faith through engagement in mission and the pursuit of social justice. We seek a full-time Associate Minister with enthusiasm to lead us in becoming more relevant and interactive with the diverse and dynamic community which lives in the heart of the city of Toronto. Provision of Christian Education will be a critical aspect of this work.

This full-time Associate will work with the Senior Minister, our various Ministries and the growing congregation in discerning new visions and creating new initiatives in ministry to the communities which we serve and need to serve.

If you would like to be a leader in this journey, please contact the Interim Moderator, the Rev. Derek Macleod, at [minister@glenviewchurch.ca](mailto:minister@glenviewchurch.ca)

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TO SERVE IN FAITH,  
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markdavidson@cablerocket.com.

Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena  
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1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

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James Presbyterian Church, 280 Oxford St.E.,  
London, ON N6A 1V4; 519-434-1127;  
areid@newstjames.com.

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### SYNOD OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

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### SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

Regina, First; Co-Interim Moderators Rev. Ina  
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306-842-1942; golaiy@sasktel.net and Rev.  
Devon Pattemore, 66 Park St., Yorkton, SK S3N  
0T3, 306-782-3659; knoxpresb@sasktel.net.  
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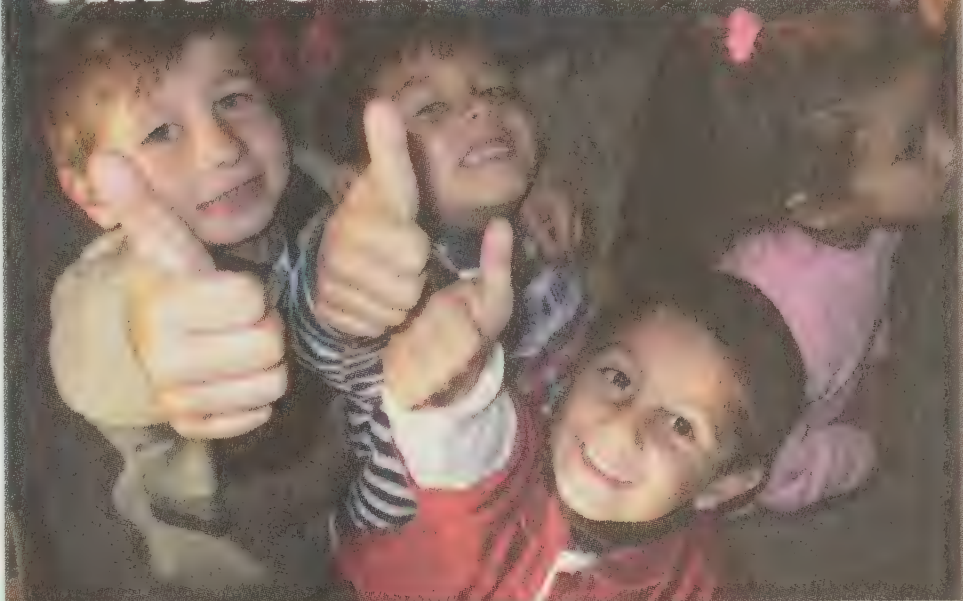
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780-293-0618; dpcrev@telus.net.

## Recognitions and Transitions

St. Paul's, Cresswell, Ont., Presbytery of Lindsay-  
Peterborough; Recognition Service for Rev.  
Virginia Brand, April 20, 2010. ■

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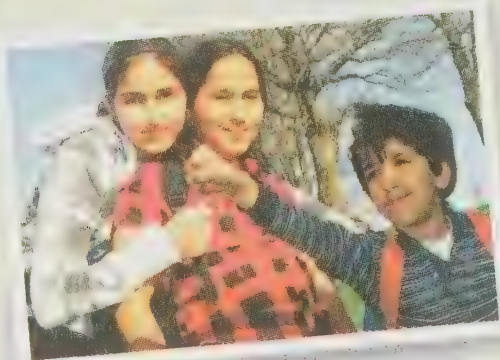
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# Called to Wonder

## A Gift Opens Doors... Proverbs 18:16a



Students hanging out at Gateway's after-school program.

### A place for hugs

More than 70 Muslim and Christian children from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Iraq, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Sudan and Canada come together in our after-school program, creating unique opportunities for exploring what it means to be in partnership with each other. We offer six main projects: homework support, leadership training, health and nutrition, arts and crafts, dance and structured play.

Without prayers and generous financial support from Presbyterians Sharing, congregations and individuals, we would not be able to do this critical work in urban Toronto. We give thanks to the Lord and make known what God has done to the nations (1 Chronicles 16:8).

*Rev. Paulette Brown  
Gateway Mission*

Now that you are back in school, you may be seeing some new faces. More and more, Canada has become a place of hope for many people around the world looking for a better place to live and raise a family.

Perhaps you have a new teacher this year. Or you're in a new classroom. Perhaps you're even in a new school. It can be scary facing new challenges. Imagine starting fresh in a new country, too! What are you doing to help these newcomers feel welcome?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada understands. That's one of the reasons why Presbyterians Sharing (the national fund supporting the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada) supports places like Flemingdon Gateway Mission as it reaches out to about 25,000 people living in Flemingdon Park, one of Toronto's most multicultural and densest neighbourhoods.

## Gifts of Change

**Gifts of Change** is a way to provide special gifts to programs such as the Flemingdon Gateway Mission supported by both Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service and Development.

### **Presbyterians Sharing Sunday is September 26.**

Why not challenge your friends at church, your family or even your friends at school to do something to make the newcomers in your class, church or school feel more welcome? Even if it's as simple as praying for them!

Or, you may choose to do something on a more global scale. For inspiration or projects to support, download the **Gifts of Change** catalogue at [presbyterian.ca/sharing#giftsofchange](http://presbyterian.ca/sharing#giftsofchange)





## Usually whenever these spiritual disciplines are brought up in the church, they are often attached to a huge guilt-ridden “should”

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

of humans or their ferocious dogs,” Linda said. She smiled at me and Bud trying to untangle ourselves.

“Yeah right, like Bud is really ferocious,” I said, trying to get another dispute going, since the fox debate was kind of running itself out of steam, or what’s even worse, I was losing it.

“That red fox was absolutely gorgeous,” said Linda. “Did you see its beautiful black pointing? You know, I am positive it is habituated to humans.” It was obvious that Linda thought there was still a little more life in the fox debate.

“I think you are right,” I conceded, just to frustrate her.

And as usual, Linda was right. The next evening as we were grilling our freshly caught fish and vegetables on the campfire while enjoying our wine and the sunset over Bridge Lake, Foxy came right up beside us, sat down and asked for some trout. And if that wasn’t enough, Foxy’s mate and at least one of their kin did the same thing. The foxes sat like well-trained dogs as they waited for food. The German couple that tended the campsite later informed us that there was a whole family of red foxes who made their living begging food from campers. They told us that the male fox liked to borrow shoes or gloves from one camper and leave them on the doorstep of another. He seemed to like to trade for his food.

Foxes habituated to human food are like any other habituated wild animal. Once they have sampled the taste of human fare they seem hooked for life. Some bears I have known that were habituated this way have been trapped, tranquilized and transported hundreds of miles into foreign wilderness. When they are released, their paws hit the ground, ambling straight for the nearest human settlement. They have no

idea where it is but they will just keep going till they find it. Compelled, almost driven, they refuse to make their living any other way than by way of their habituation to humans and their food. It is far more than a preference, far more than mere laziness; it is an incorrigible craving. They seem incapable of being corrected, amended or reformed.

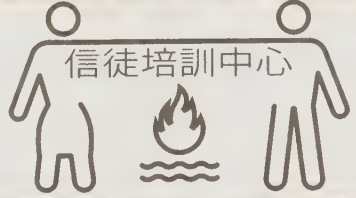
The red foxes that Linda and I met at Bridge Lake were habituated to living from free human food handouts just the same way. And as I reflected upon their habituation, it got me thinking about habituation in a positive sense, habituation as it could apply to the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life; to silence, solitude and prayer; to contemplation, meditation and scripture; to gratitude, obedience and praise; to fellowship, community and communion; to justice, kindness and walking humbly with God. Usually whenever these spiritual disciplines are brought up in the church, they are often attached to a huge guilt-ridden “should.” It strikes me that over the years, Christians have probably been “should” on enough by the church and its preachers concerning these means of grace. It seems to me that the results of this approach have not had a very positive effect amongst 21st-century Christians, kind of like what you would expect from force-feeding foxes human food. If the spiritual disciplines I have listed in triplets above are truly means of God’s delectable grace, they will form habits instead of needing to be habit formed; they will habituate the Christian like the delightful taste of human food habituates the fox.

Through them the Christian will “taste and see that the Lord is good” and be moved to continually and habitually seek refuge in Him. (Psalm 34:8) I truly believe this. The key is not to be brow-beaten to work

hard to form habits; it is rather to be invited to “taste and see” and be habituated; to be invited through Christian proclamation and promise to partake of the means of grace that are the spiritual disciplines and trust that they will produce an incorrigible craving to follow Jesus. With regards to the means of grace, we are to be habituated like a fox. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter’s Aspen: Embracing the Creator’s Fire.*

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# Habituated Like a Fox

CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN "SHOULD" ON ENOUGH BY THE CHURCH. **BY DAVID WEBBER**

ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**"DID YOU SEE THAT?!"** Linda exclaimed.

Bud the Lab snore-snorted loudly, jumped up from his coma and woofed at about the same time as I regained consciousness myself. Linda was pointing under the branches of a low-slung white spruce tree adjacent to our camp. I peered out of the window of the travel trailer but all I could see in the dim light of evening were shadows.

"No, I did not see that," I said. "What exactly was that?"

"Well there were some cute chipmunks running back and forth looking for scraps when all of a sudden a fox ran into the middle of them, scattering them in all directions. Then the fox started sniffing around where the chipmunks were searching for food. I don't think the fox was after the chipmunks but was after whatever they were after—scraps I think."

"Yeah right, a wild fox that tamely wanders into camp, right onto our doorstep no less, and who doesn't eat chip-

munks," I said, as argumentatively as I could.

"Well, the fox could have easily caught one of the chipmunks but he didn't even try," countered Linda. "It just started sniffing around at what the chipmunks were sniffing. It seemed pretty tame to me."

We continued to argue about foxes as wild animals and as predators, just like we have argued about anything and everything through the 40 years of delightful incompatibility that is our marriage. We were still standing forth as we took Bud for his late evening stroll. Right in the middle of Bud's walk and our debate, a large, beautiful, bushy-tailed red fox came wandering out of the bush along the trail. He was almost nose-to-nose with us when Bud spotted him. Bud barked, dashed and hit the end of his retractable leash, nearly knocking me on my keester as the fox ran nonchalantly up the trail.

"That fox is definitely not afraid" continued on page 49





The sanctuary was renovated in 2009.



Children's time.



Rev. Jennifer Geddes, Rev. Dr. [unclear] and Grace Bernini prepare for a service.



St. Andrew's ministers and choir members.

## ST. ANDREW'S, Victoria, B.C.

SUBMITTED BY MARILYN BULLOCK  
PHOTOS BY JOHN MITCHELL

What I love most is to see our congregational members. Some attend with visiting family and others bring senior members who find it difficult to come on their own. I am extremely grateful for their sincere kindness and contributions, as they insist on including them. They are truly pillars of sustainability in our church membership. Others, who have once come as couples and now come by themselves, are to be admired because their faith has sustained them through difficult times and losses. We are very aware of those who are missing due to illness, or of those who have taken holidays. And we are pleased to see and welcome them back. We miss them when they are gone.

The amazing gift that comes with sitting in the balcony is watching the children running and tripping as they race to the front for Sunday school. You see their smiling faces, the excitement and delight at being the centre of attention. They are an inspiration to the congregation and we look forward to seeing them each Sunday morning.

What is not to love about the spirit within this church? Be it its sanctuary, the dedication of its members, the fellowship and the gratefulness that we embrace each week, we are blessed to have a church in which to give thanks.

The entire sanctuary envelops you while you silently sit in prayer. This truly is the most beautiful church.



Enjoying the first hymn.



# 2010 Christmas Cover Art Contest

Entry Deadline: November 1st, 2010

Share your gifts with the rest of the church this Christmas: Help us illustrate the December issue of the *Presbyterian Record*. Who knows—maybe your drawing will appear on the cover! As space allows, we feature as many drawings as possible somewhere in the magazine. **This contest is open to all ages.**



Send your Christmas-themed art on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to:

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Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Please be sure to write your name, age and your church's information on the back of each entry.

Deadline is November 1st, 2010



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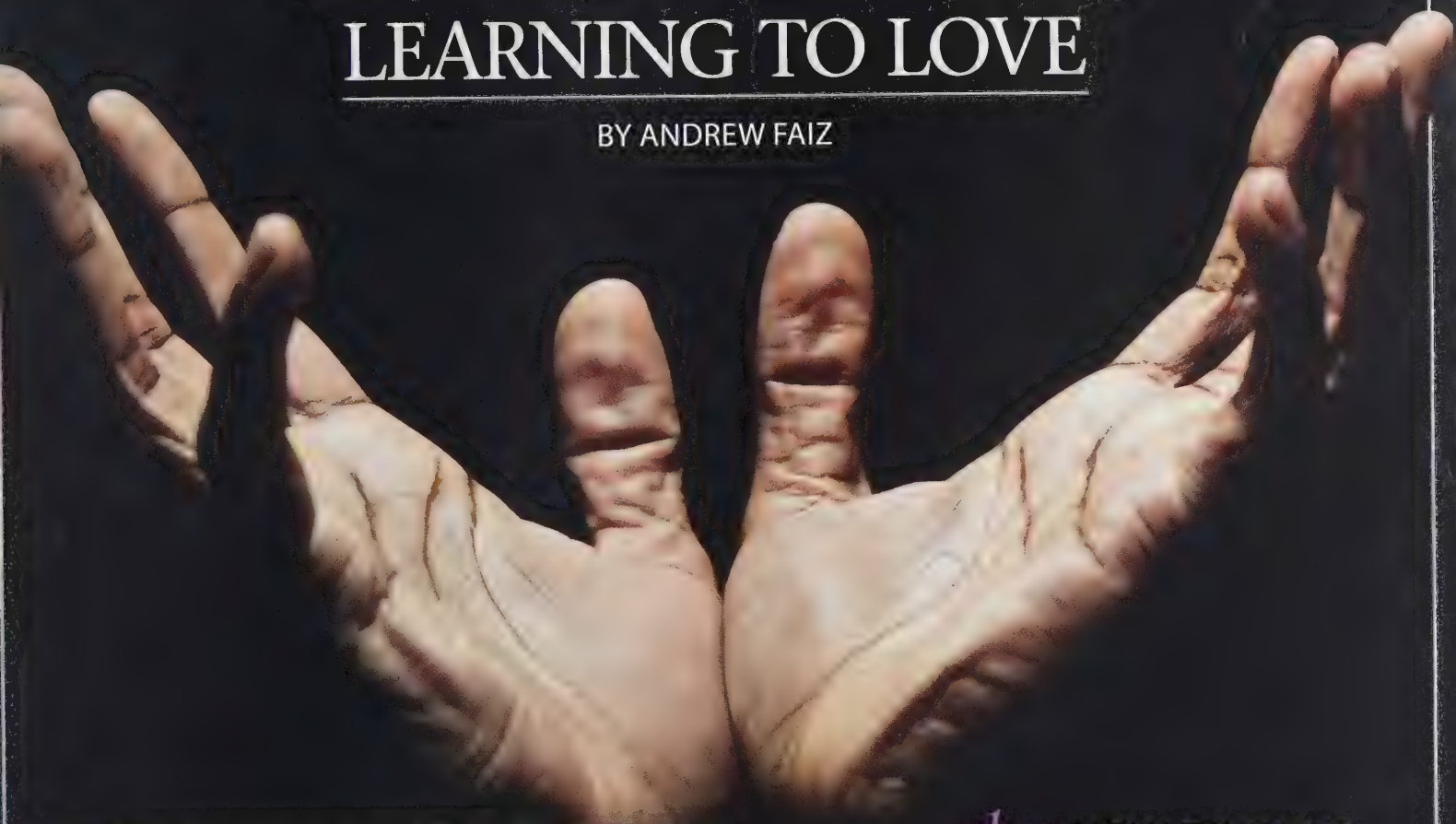
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BY ANDREW FAIZ



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OCTOBER 2010

## the Guru Tour

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PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY:  
IT'S NOT (JUST) ABOUT  
THANKSGIVING



**10**  
NEWS: GAY TEEN  
LEAVES CHURCH



# I Am Christian

SPEAKING UP FOR CHRIST. BY DAVID HARRIS

**D**o you remember Joe “I am Canadian!!!”? Joe was the exuberant character in the Molson beer ad, untypically Canadian in his extroverted pride in our country. Several knock-offs, mostly satirical, have appeared since. But I’d like someone to create an exuberant and untypically Canadian Christian version.

It would go something like this.

Hey

I am not a Bible-thumper

or a hate-monger.

I don’t think the world

I live in is evil,

or that my wife should obey me,

I don’t believe Jesus came to bludgeon people about their failings or

heal them like a showman,

And I don’t think Satan is hiding around every corner.

I believe Jesus came to spread peace not hatred.

I believe other people are good and not simply sinners waiting to be saved.

I believe humans are created in the image of a loving God, not corrupted and inherently wicked.

God is a God of overflowing love that cannot be contained.

Grace is God’s gift freely offered to everyone—it is inherently cheap;

Fear is expensive and costs us our souls, it fuels anger, hatred and ignorance:

God weeps over our rejection of His love, yearns to draw us close, searches us out in the darkest recesses of our self-hatred, loathing and fear.

Jesus came not with a long list of rules but a simple message of hope and love.

The Spirit moves throughout



**It was I who was feeling defensive about another Christian’s deplorable behaviour.**

the world, across time and in the midst of all people, Seeking to embrace them and to dry away their tears. We are called to be Christ in the world: to comfort the sad, to care for the sick, to be family to those with no friends. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am Christian!!!

Now that won’t win a prize for poetry or advertising, but the recent scandal of the pastor threatening to burn Qur’ans left me feeling, not for the first time, that my identity as a Christian had been hijacked. It’s happened so many times over the past several years; Christianity is being defined by people on its fringes.

Interestingly, I had a discussion with the local imam about this on Sept. 11—the day the Florida pastor planned to fan the flames of ignorance. The imam had been invited by my home church as a sign of solidarity in peacemaking and reconciliation.

In a wide-ranging discussion about our faiths in the contemporary world, the imam raised the point that moderate Muslims needed to speak up and

condemn acts of terrorism planned or carried out in the name of Islam.

That is why he had accepted the invitation: he wanted to build bridges, to show that he was on the side of peace.

But in this case, it was actually I, as a member of the majority Christian community, who was feeling defensive about another Christian’s deplorable behaviour.

There is nothing new in this, of course. St. Paul also saw his faith hijacked, and he sharply challenged several early church communities for doing things in the name of the new way that were clearly far off track, whether claiming to follow various other leaders through baptism or through lawless behaviour.

Fortunately, many Christian leaders sent messages to would-be Qur’an burner, Mr. Jones, telling him that what he was doing was far from Christian. Unfortunately, we live in a day when mainstream media really don’t understand any religion. And they will also give time and space to bizarre positions on just about any subject under the guise of fairness.

Perhaps what is needed is a flood of letters to newspapers and comments to online media decrying this caricaturizing of our faith. One thing is for sure, the Terry Joneses of the world will always get their 15 minutes of fame.

If mainstream Christians want others to know the true message of our faith, they need to speak up. Otherwise, we shall all be marked as destructive, manipulative fanatics. The love of Christ deserves better. ■

*David Harris*



# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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## A Change is Gonna Come

It's never happened before. It may  
never happen again.

A former minister at St. James,  
Stouffville, Ont., is the newly elected  
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.

The year was 1984. If Rev.  
Gale was ready for the congrega-  
tion, it was evident the congregation  
was ready for him. But not without  
adjustments between the pulpit and  
the pews. For this "down south" pastor  
was unlike any minister St. James or  
Stouffville had ever seen.

St. James, deeply immersed in  
traditionalism, found itself face-  
to-face with an American pastor  
prone to change. So confusing was  
this, one elder, prior to a commu-  
nion, asked: "Will nothing ever be the  
same?"

To which Rev. Gale courteously but  
fervently replied, "Never."

**JIM THOMAS, STOUFFVILLE, ONT.**

## Praying for Them

The Aug. 6, 2010 *Edmonton Journal*  
carried an article about a New  
Westminster teenager who was  
rebuked by her minister for posing for  
a newspaper photograph for the city's  
gay pride celebration. The teen and  
her parents left the church as a result.

Whether or not we understand  
or agree with the beliefs and actions  
of our young people, our pastoral  
responsibility is to listen and try  
to understand and to accompany  
them in their journey towards full  
adulthood—sharing about our journey  
as it is opportune to do so and praying  
for them. It is not our responsibility to  
tell them who they should be or what  
they should do.

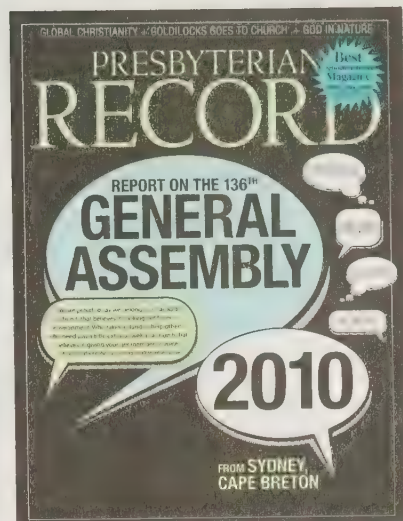
**REV. DR. JOHN C. CARR, EDMONTON**

## GA Has Passion for the Cause

*Re Dragging the Anchor, July/August*

Calvin Brown's extended metaphor  
of a ship dragging its anchor on an  
uncharted course is the complete

# Letters



write to us

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opposite of my experience of General  
Assembly and the Presbyterian Church  
in Canada. I first attended assembly  
as an elder in 2003. I tangibly felt  
the power and presence of the Holy  
Spirit in the worship times and  
prayer times. In 2010, I attended as a  
clergy representative. I attribute my  
sense of vocational calling, and my  
vision for ministry directly to the  
worship and discernment experiences  
at General Assembly. Assembly has  
given me a "passion for the cause  
... to participate with full excite-  
ment in the work and witness of  
our church."

**REV. WENDY ADAMS, ARMSTRONG, B.C.** ➤

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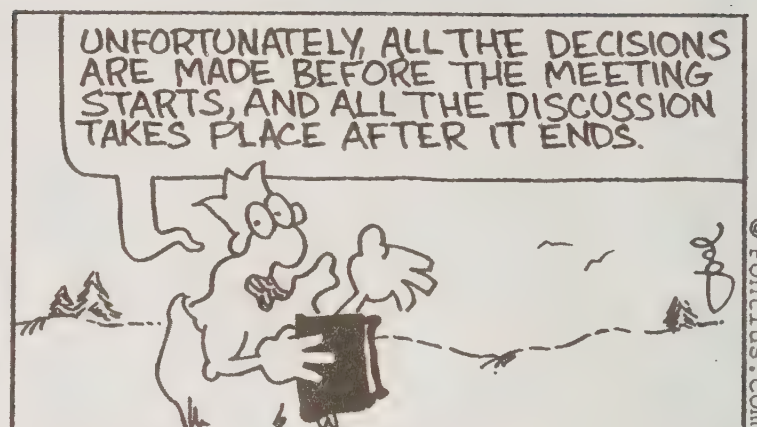
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## Pontius' Puddle



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### Let Justice Flow, Not Noise *Re Unable to Act, July/August*

When I read Ruth Houtby's piece, ideas began to swirl around in my head. One of them arose from her references to assembly's debate over whether or not to designate lay missionaries to administer communion, and the proposal to plant 10 new churches a year over the next few years. It came to me upon hearing the tag end of a David Suzuki item on the CBC. Suzuki's piece was about the tar sands.

The exploitation of the tar sands is a major contributor to the amount of

carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and therefore to climate change. The scientific consensus is that the world is getting warmer, and a significant part of that change is caused by human activity, the direct result of our penchant for the good life.

Yet we debate how to provide communion services in "rural and remote" places and whether we should try to plant 10 new churches a year. As Amos said:

*Take from me the  
noise of your songs,  
To the sound of your harps*

*I will not listen,  
But let justice flow  
down like waters,  
And righteousness like  
an ever flowing stream.*

Perhaps we should expend our energy on speaking truth to power, a truth that grows out of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, and not worry about songs and harps. We can do better than tag along after the likes of David Suzuki (as I have just done).

GEOFF JOHNSTON, DUNNVILLE, ONT.

### Collective Sin?

#### *Re Forgive Us Our Sins, July/August*

In his otherwise thoughtful article, David Harris says that Dietrich Bonhoeffer's martyrdom did not expiate the collective sin of Germany in permitting the rise of Hitler and Nazism.

The notion of collective sin is difficult to impose on a whole nation. The German nation never gave a free majority vote for the Nazi party's dictatorship—it was foisted on them by a series of underhanded political maneuvers, and once established it was virtually impossible to shake off. Modern Germany has made strong efforts to expiate the evils of the Nazi period. Is Great Britain guilty of a collective sin for the wholesale destruction of German cities, or the United States for the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and various subsequent atrocities committed by



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small groups? And are Canadians who were children or not yet born at the time of the native residential schools expected to share in guilt? It seems unfair, and perhaps an affront to German-Canadians, to single out the case of 1930s Germany as an example.

CHARLES NEILL, EDMONTON

## Live and Learn

*Re Long Time Coming, and Some Personal Reflection, Letters, July/August*

You can't change history in which Scotland, although a small country, has a super abundance and probably ranks as having the largest diaspora of its people worldwide. As far as church union is concerned, try and learn a little about it and find out about the number of eminently educated people that were involved with the arrival of an acceptable union.

The letter authors should perhaps watch the New York Tartan Day parade and count how many "dewy eyed" Scots there are involved—thousands! Further to Linda Whitehead's letter, she never spoke a truer word when she said, "I knew nothing of the complicated history of Scottish Presbyterianism." Live and learn.

FREDERIC FORSYTH, BARRIE, ONT.

## A Balanced Approach

*Re Hymns to Feed the Imagination, online blog by Andrew Donaldson*

Many growing contemporary churches are tossing out all traditional hymns in their worship. I believe this to be as big a mistake, as is rejecting all contemporary hymns. As a denomination that prides itself on a 'balanced' approach to theology, we should be able to navigate a 'third way' in worship renewal (as opposed to either traditional or contemporary). Defining a vision that includes the best of a broad spectrum of worship expression is a very doable objective. These hymns

that Andrew mentions are a part of this vision.

GORD MCCROSTIE

## Oh Katie!

*Re Sweaters and Minimalism, online blog by Katie Munnik*

Maureen said: I'm pretty sure that the loved feeling that's knit into sweaters is just as effective at warding off the cold as the thick cables and the scratchy wool. Blue will be well protected from the elements in his sweater of many colours.

West Coast Oma said: I always think that sweaters, like quilts, wrap us in love and support when the maker is unable to physically be there to hold us and give us those much-needed encouraging words and comfort. Keep on knitting; we have witnessed you doing it with so much concentration and love for the wearer.

Kim W. said: Oh Katie, I can picture you doing this. You have beautiful sweaters, and I can't imagine you having to part with any of them. I have been going through all of our things and trying to part with as much as I can as I come to the realization that our cozy new house is lacking in storage. I think moving a few times in the last year has really made us realize that while we are blessed to have been given lots of "stuff," and we have a lot of "stuff," too much stuff just gets in the way, literally. But, those articles filled with memories are just impossible to part with, so I had my lovely hubby build me a shelf!

ALL COMMENTS FROM ONLINE FORUM

## A Spiritual Struggle

*Re Laws and Motions, April*

No wholly new species has ever been observed to emerge in real time. We have seen many species go extinct, but not come into being. Therefore, the one believing in evolution believes in something he cannot see. But does this not mean that belief in evolution is a religion? Christians also believe in a deity ➤

# BUILDING HOPE

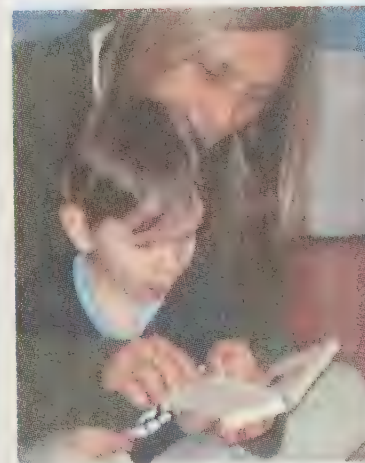
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of children  
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to play with  
their children  
so that they  
will learn.



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Evangel Hall Mission

## Annual Canned Food Drive

With the school year well on its way, Evangel Hall Mission is getting ready to support the 39th Annual Ecumenical Community Canned Food Collection.

Food collected from this drive helps support food programs at Evangel Hall Mission

Here at the Hall, we rely on the food collected to help us provide thousands of meals annually to hundreds of men, women, youth and children we serve.

In order to ensure the continued success of this program, we require your help.

The canned food collection requires volunteers to assist with flyer delivery on **Saturday November 20<sup>th</sup>** from 9:30 to noon and for the food collection on **Saturday November 27<sup>th</sup>**, again from 9:30 to noon.

Please contact Paula Aceto at 416-504-3563 x 231

By supporting the food drive, you become a partner in this important, life-changing community work. Your support makes a difference.

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## FRONT Letters

we have never seen. Make no mistake: the debate between the religious believer and the evolutionist is a battle between opposing religious and belief systems. It is a spiritual struggle.

GUNAR KRAVALIS, FROM ONLINE FORUM

### Good Memories

*Re Quantity Not Quality,  
online blog by Patricia Schneider*

Isn't it great to have good memories of your childhood? You and I are blessed to have what many do not.

JANET OPHUS, FROM ONLINE FORUM

### A Matter of Perception

*Re Goldilocks Goes to Church,  
July/August*

Very cool story. It's about wonderful people who recognize that none of us and none of our human creations (churches, health clubs, soccer teams) is perfect. Despite our lack of perfection, our communities are often beautiful. A lovely reminder that the things we think are wrong are often only a matter of perception and that it's always a good idea to take the log out of our own eye before commenting on whether we think others are messed up.

MARGARET MILLER

### Thinking Through

*Re How Does Our Garden Grow?,  
May 2009*

This article cannot simply be set aside. It calls for a thoughtful



Goldilocks Goes to Church, July/August issue

response—and some rigorous soul searching.

Something to ponder: What is the difference between religious zeal, and passionate spirituality that reflects hunger for Jesus Christ himself?

DIANE EATON, FROM ONLINE FORUM

### Editor's Note

Letters have been edited to make-fit in the print version. They can be viewed in full online at [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca). As always, let there be conversation amongst us. ■

online extra

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# What's the Story?

DIPSY-DOODLING BETWEEN PERSPECTIVES. BY ANDREW FAIZ

## *We don't always*

get it right. Or, I suppose I should say, for every article published in the *Record*, there is always another perspective. At least one other; often several others. We don't expect everybody to agree with everything in every issue. But we do encourage conversation, in the letters section, or elsewhere.

Last month we published a story about Burlington East, Ont., and what was deemed, telling the story from the church's point of view, as a very successful amalgamation. But ... pull out a little further and for some others who were involved in the amalgamation, this is a cautionary tale. Told from a different perspective the process was filled with acrimony, resulting in ministers and members leaving the denomination.

Still, we cannot negate the fact that those at Burlington East today are very happy and proud with the church; and good things are happening there; and the church is growing. But, there are others, not at the church, who feel very differently. Is our published story false?

Or take the story in this issue of Tory Inglis, the gay teen who was till recently a life member of First Church, New Westminster, B.C. As an editorial team we struggled to find a balance in the story. This has been complicated by the fact that nobody attached to the congregation or its presbytery would speak to the *Record* officially.

Hurt and dismayed after a meeting with her minister, Inglis shared her personal trauma with the local secular press. It's the kind of story the secular media loves. The following appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*:

The minister told her the church would prefer if she withdraw from the group that organized the Pride



YOU CAN SEE  
THE IMPLICATION:  
JUDGMENTAL  
AND CRITICAL  
BIG TRADITIONAL  
INSTITUTION  
VS. TEEN. BUT IS  
THAT THE STORY?

events, Tory said, but she refused and withdrew her membership from the church instead. "Above all, I want to promote peace and love and acceptance," Tory said.

You can see the implication: Judgmental and critical big traditional institution vs. teen. But is that the story?

And perhaps because this is the first reported version, other versions sound defensive. A presbytery spokesperson said to the *Vancouver Province*: "If the details as reported are accurate, at the very least it was handled badly pastorally." And the national office said in a statement: "The actions of First PC, as reported by the *Province*, seem contradictory to the decisions of various General Assemblies as summarized in the *Social Action Handbook*." Both have been criticized for these statements. Despite the fact that both statements are correct: "If The Actions

... As Reported ..." But neither of the statements, plus the published articles in the B.C. papers, which were then picked up by wire services, is complete.

The complication, of course, is the PCC's position on homosexuality, which is a combination of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and "Hate The Sin, Love The Sinner." This dipsy-doodling between absolute statements will always lead to divisiveness when the issue arises; and it will arise. The *Record* published a news story in March 2005 that a presbytery was going to send a same-sex overture to General Assembly. Congregations rushed to cancel their Every Home Plan subscriptions because we reported such filth. Like Tory Inglis, we told.

So, what is the story? Certainly, it's not straightforward. Told from different perspectives—the teen's, the congregation's, the presbytery's, the denomination's, plus, theological and cultural—it takes on different shadings. Each point-of-view interprets the same set of facts differently. Is there a correct version? No; just a series of events involving a handful of individuals, all for whom we have compassion.

Let me take my own lumps: This month I report on my travels in May, particularly the Emmaus Road conference sponsored by the Church. Though it's a long article, it needs to be book length to be comprehensive. I encourage you to please read other perspectives on Emmaus at [Presbyterian.ca/emmaus](http://Presbyterian.ca/emmaus). Rev. Kristine O'Brien, Rev. Derek Macleod, Rev. Wes Denyer and others tell the story differently, and that difference is very important. It is imperative we do listen and do talk to each other. ■

Andrew Faiz is the *Record's* managing editor.



## Teen Leaves Church After Role in Pride Day Questioned

MINISTER'S CONTROVERSIAL COMMENTS SPIN ACROSS THE MEDIA. **BY AMY MACLACHLAN**

A LESBIAN TEEN AND a congregation in New Westminster, B.C., are at the heart of a dispute that has resulted in the teen and her family leaving the Presbyterian church.

The situation arose when a story in the *Royal City Record* on June 12 highlighted 17-year-old Tory Inglis's involvement in the Royal City Pride Society (which organized New Westminster's first Gay Pride Day) and was accompanied by a photo of the girl with two gay men. Inglis, who has been a life member at First, New Westminster, came out as a lesbian two years ago.

On Aug. 5, the *Vancouver Province* reported that Inglis was asked by her minister, Tim Bruneau, to either re-think her involvement in the society or step down from her leadership post with the church's junior youth group.

"Basically, they told me that I wasn't being a positive role model for the youth in the church and the younger children, and that I was promoting a sexual lifestyle," Inglis told the *Province*.

The Inglis family left the congregation. The newspaper did not speak to the minister or the clerk of session, who were both on holiday. Nor did the newspaper seek out statements from the Presbyterian Church.

The presbytery moderator, Rev. Jim Smith, subsequently sent an email to the members of the Presbytery of Westminster: "You have probably seen the front-page article in today's *Vancouver Province* ... Until all the details can be known, please do not discuss this

matter with the media —instead, direct them to me."

He was later quoted in the *Province*, saying his sympathies were with the Inglis family. "Pastorally, it's saddening. That's neither the theology nor the policy of the Presbyterian Church in Canada," he said. "If the details as reported are accurate, at the very least it was handled badly pastorally."

The national church, through the associate secretary of communications, Colin Carmichael, contacted the newspaper and also issued a similar statement to presbytery:

"The actions of First PC, as reported by the *Province*, seem contradictory to the decisions of the various General Assemblies as summarized in the *Social Action Handbook*:

"The Presbyterian Church in Canada has never limited the roles of its members on the basis of their sexual orientation. These roles include church school teachers, musicians, youth leaders, ruling elders, teaching elders and members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries. No legislation has ever existed for this purpose and,

following six years of study, the special committee on sexual orientation finds that none is needed.'—*Social Action Handbook*, page 46

"It is imperative that the PCC respond to the report. We will be contacting media in the Vancouver area to clarify the positions and policies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In the event that this situation has been misreported, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can co-ordinate



Tory Inglis, 17, and her mother, Karen, stand outside First, New Westminster, B.C.



corrections to the media."

The *Presbyterian Record* was unable to speak on the record to anyone from First Church, or the presbytery.

Bruneau, who was on vacation when the issue hit the press, responded with an email to presbytery before his return. The following is an excerpt:

"I am indeed shocked at how huge this has become. I very cautiously approached this issue with the Inglis family—they are great folks—and believed that it could be handled in an agreeable manner. In no way did session (by whose authority the clerk and I were sent to speak with the family) have any desire to make an ultimatum 'change your ways or leave,' but to lovingly ask her to consider the manner in which she conducts herself as a leader of our junior youth; that is, her taking on of a leadership position as a very public promoter of the Gay Pride Day in New Westminster. Our clerk kept repeating in that very uncomfortable discussion (in which I asked the parents to be a part of) with Tory that we love her and that the church welcomes all, gay and straight, and calls all to follow and be formed by Jesus Christ. We also spoke of how the church's role is to call people to live out their Christian calling in and out of the church."

"Tory came home visibly upset [after the meeting]," said Karen Inglis, Tory's mother. She had been treasurer and head of Sunday school before the family left the church in support of their daughter.

She said she has been trying to correct misinformation in the media regarding the family's decision to leave, since some assumed Tory had been "thrown out" of the church.

"It was our choice to leave. It was emotional for me to walk away from something after 18 years." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record's* senior writer.

# World News

## Physics Versus Faith

JEWISH, Christian and Muslim leaders have rejected claims that belief in the divine has been disproved following the assertion by British physicist Stephen Hawking that science leaves no role for God in the creation of the universe.

In his new book, *The Grand Design*, Hawking says, "Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."

In response, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, said in *The Times* newspaper, "Belief in God is not about plugging a gap in explaining how one thing relates to another within the universe. It is the belief that there is an intelligent, living agent on whose activity everything ultimately depends for its existence. Physics on its own will not settle the question on why there is something rather than nothing."

Ibrahim Mogra of the interfaith committee of the Muslim Council of Britain, said, "If we look at the universe and all that has been created, it indicates that somebody has been here to bring it into existence. That somebody is the almighty creator." —*ENI*

## WCC: Repeal Blasphemy Law

"GREAT DISMAY" at the killing of two young Christians in Faisalabad, Pakistan, in July was expressed by the World Council of Churches' general secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit in letters to Pakistan's president and prime minister.

Pastor Rashid Emmanuel and his brother Sajid Emmanuel were shot dead on court premises by unidenti-

fied gunmen when they were taken there by police to face a charge of blasphemy against Islam.

Tveit appealed to the Pakistani authorities "to ensure immediate and necessary actions to bring to justice those who are responsible."

He also reiterated concern that the "misuse of the blasphemy law in Pakistan has led to physical violence, damage, destruction of properties and loss of life."

Pakistan's blasphemy law provides for a mandatory death sentence or life imprisonment even for unintentional blasphemy offences. —*ENI*

## Malawi a 'Dictatorship?'

MALAWI is quickly sliding into a dictatorship where it is a crime to hold dissenting views to government policy, leaders of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia Synod, have warned.

The charges came after the arrest and subsequent release of the synod's general secretary, Rev. Levi Nyondo.

"We are shocked and surprised that government could stoop so low to arrest a general secretary of a reputable church," said synod moderator Rev. Mezuwa Banda.

"Malawi is sliding back to the era of dictatorship and as a church we will not allow this to continue."

Nyondo was arrested on Aug. 20 after speaking at the funeral of former cabinet minister Moses Chirambo, who died just days after being dismissed from the government.

Nyondo said it was ironic for the government to praise Chirambo when it had removed him from the cabinet. He said the government appeared to want the president's brother to lead the country.

Nyondo was charged with sedition for uttering words that could incite public anger. —*ENI* ■



# Community News

## Presbyterians Help Pakistan

WHEN THE CANADIAN government announced it would match individual donations for Pakistan in a Pakistan Floods Relief Fund from Aug. 2 to Oct. 3, Presbyterians responded. More than \$147,000 had been donated to Presbyterian World Service and Development by the time the *Record* went to press in mid-September.

As of Aug. 30, the floods had destroyed an estimated 3.5 million houses, leaving approximately 4.6 million people homeless, according to the United Nations.

The rebuilding process is slow, even for skilled workers, as prices for housing materials more than doubled after the floods. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the ACT Alliance, PWS&D is supporting more than 150,000 people in Pakistan with food, shelter, emergency supplies, health care, and cash-for-work initiatives. —A.M. with files from PWS&D

## Praise for Presbyterian Mystery

RELIGION BLOGGER Janet Sketchley offered praise for *Caught Dead*, a mystery novel by Jayne Self that currently runs as a serial on the *Presbyterian Record* website.

In a June 28 post, Sketchley praised Self's "compassion for her characters," both the cast of small town church people and the Presbyterian protagonist, Rev. Dean Constable.

A weekly chapter has appeared on [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) since April, but due to popular demand two chapters are now posted weekly on Mondays and Thursdays; the final chapter will appear Oct. 4. —C.Purvis

## Youth Opportunities

THE WORLD COUNCIL of Churches is offering an opportunity for Christians ages 18-30 to participate in their 2011 conferences through the Stew-



Presbyterians have given thousands to help those left homeless after flooding in Pakistan.

ards Program. Youth can take part in the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, May 12-26, 2011.

The meeting will celebrate the achievements of the Decade to Overcome Violence, which began in 2001. Youth from around the world will help with the functioning of the meeting.

Costs for the conference are covered through the WCC and airfare will be subsidized through the Presbyterian Church's Youth in Mission department. Stewards will endure an intensive program of activities and long days of work. The deadline for applications is Nov. 30.

Applications can be submitted through the Youth in Mission office by mail or email ([yim@presbyterian.ca](mailto:yim@presbyterian.ca)), and inquiries can be made to Lindsey Hepburn-Aley at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 259. —WCC and PCC

## Third Intern at Ploughshares

MELANIE FERRIER began an eight-month internship at a Waterloo-based ecumenical peace centre Sept. 1, making her the third intern to be hired through a partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"I enjoy communications and building relationships with donors," said the political science graduate, who

spent time working with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee before her internship with Project Ploughshares.

Ferrier has set her sights on a career in journalism. She plans to begin courses next September in Carleton University's master of journalism program. She attends Cheyne Presbyterian in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Ferrier will be the final intern employed through a three-year program sponsored by the Presbyterian Church.

Project Ploughshares, the ecumenical peace centre of the Canadian Council of Churches, is mandated to advance policies that prevent war and armed violence and build peace. Its work is supported by the PCC. —C.Purvis

## Youth Raise Thousands

THE GRADE 9 AND 10 youth group at Leaside, Toronto, raised over \$9,000 in less than six months to build a well in Tanzania through Presbyterian World Service and Development. The dollar figure was \$2,000 more than their original goal; the extra money will go towards the congregation's Presbyterians Sharing allocation.

The youth group began the project last December. A 26-hour famine, pancake breakfast, silent auction and



bake sale, a quilt auction, and the making and selling of Tanzania Teddies all helped raise funds. The youth presented PWS&D director, Ken Kim with a cheque for \$7,000 in June.

"The congregation and friends of Leaside supported the youth's project from beginning to the end," said Leaside's associate minister of Christian education, Rev. Angela Cluney. "They are an amazing group of youth who deserve recognition." —A.M.

### Art and Inspiration at Knox

KNOX COLLEGE, TORONTO, is encouraging people to explore spirituality and sacredness through art at an event on Oct. 16, run in conjunction with the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The event, entitled Sacred Art... and Divine Inspiration, will feature two keynote speakers: Father Dan Donovan, professor emeritus at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto and an avid contemporary art collector, and Gillian McIntyre, adult program coordinator for the AGO.

"[Donovan will be] talking about his collection, his philosophy on collecting contemporary art and how the art speaks to him as a Christian," Lisa Watson, Knox's director of development told the *Record*. "[McIntyre] is going to focus on the AGO's redesign ... a reflective space that was quiet and inviting to the contemplation required to think and feel about the human condition as the art invokes it." —C.Purvis

### National Staff Milestones

TWO STAFF AT NATIONAL OFFICES hit major milestones in September. Kim Arnold, the church's head archivist, marked 30 years with the PCC, and Terrie-Lee Hamilton celebrated 20 years as senior administrator in the General Assembly Office.

Arnold began her work at the national Presbyterian archives in 1980, with a black rotary telephone, an Underwood typewriter and a steep learning curve ahead. Thirty years later, she says she is still learning and still loving her job.

"At the core of it, I still love the fact that my records and my work span from the 1700s to 2010," she said.

Hamilton, who spends much of her time tackling the mammoth task of organizing General Assembly, said the office has undergone many changes over the years. Most include offering greater support to the committees of assembly, presbytery and synod clerks, and commissioners at assembly.

"It is working with people from one end of the country to the other that gives me the greatest fulfilment." —C. P. and A.M.

### Fighting Hunger

KNOX, ST. THOMAS, ONT., has responded to the call of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help end hunger. Three signs with the slogan, Growing Together mark plots of land surrounding the city of St. Thomas. A total of 25 acres have been planted in soybeans and corn on the farms of Bill Cooke, Colin, Jeff and John Ferguson, and Bill Walters.

Don Vicary initiated the project, inspiring the congregation to assist CFGB's "Response to Hunger." Some of the countries receiving assistance include Ethiopia, India and Zimbabwe.

Last year, \$12.4 million was raised, with 40,000 tonnes of grain sent to 31 countries. The Canadian International Development Agency matches on a 4:1 basis to a maximum of \$25 million. —Leslie Carroll-Frey



The youth at Leaside, Toronto, present a cheque to PWS&D to build a well in Africa.

### Camp Dedicates Chapel

CAMP KINTAIL in Goderich, Ont., dedicated its new chapel on July 3. About 250 friends of Kintail were present, along with Rev. Tijs Theijsmeyer, moderator of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario.

The chapel was built thanks to donations from across the synod, as well as WMS and women's groups, congregations, Sunday schools, and individuals. A large gift from the Gert Currie Estate, from Knox, Woodstock, Ont., enabled the project to be completed this year. Every weekend from April to June, volunteers helped build the chapel.

In August 2009—the same year Kintail celebrated its 80th anniversary—the camp's previous chapel was decommissioned and dismantled after discovering that it sat just outside camp property.

Kintail also dedicated a new rock-climbing tower, which was built from funds given to the camp after the Presbyterian church in Ailsa Craig, Ont., was closed. —A.M. ■

### Daring Rescue in Halifax

IT WAS AN UNUSUAL SIGHT at the Church of St. David, Halifax. On Aug. 12, police and firefighters launched a rescue operation for a seagull trapped atop the building, its wing impaled on a lightning rod.

A firefighter managed to catch hold of the wounded bird and brought it safely to the ground. "The eagle has landed," said a dispatcher as the seagull was placed in a cardboard box, CBC News reported.

It was transported to an animal hospital in Dartmouth, and then transferred to a wildlife rescue centre to recuperate before its release. —C.Purvis with files from CBC News



# Africa's Forgotten Generation

GHANAIAN MINISTER DEVOTES LIFE TO ADVOCATING FOR THE ELDERLY. BY AMY MACLACHLAN



Samuel Ayete-Nyampong helps Africa's seniors.

"AFRICA IS GOING THROUGH a revolution," said Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong. "There has been a sudden explosion of people living beyond 60 years. But there are no provisions for seniors."

Ayete-Nyampong is the former director of social and ecumenical relations for the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. He was in Canada in March to solidify relations between the PCG and the Presbyterian Church in Canada—a final conversation as his six-year term came to an end.

"I call on all churches, including the PCC, to support projects on elder care," he told the *Record*. "If we bless them, they will bless us when they leave this life."

The number of seniors living in Africa has jumped in the last few decades

due largely to advances in medical resources. According to a report from the World Health Organization that draws on United Nations statistics, Africa's older population is expected to increase almost four-fold between 2005 and 2050: from 36.6 million to 141 million. And though seniors accounted for less than five per cent of the total population of sub-Saharan Africa in 2005, the numbers are projected to grow to 8.3 per cent by the middle of the century.

The statistics aren't the same in countries hit hard by HIV, but generally speaking, the population is aging—though governments do little to care for this segment of society.

"Families used to live together, but with social change, the young people are leaving rural areas for the city, and the old people are abandoned. They're left without anyone to care for them," said Ayete-Nyampong.

He said too often outreach programs focus on everyone but the elderly.

"The elderly aren't educated, so when they're left alone, they aren't able to improve their condition. And often, the elderly are taking care of HIV-positive adults, who leave the city because of stigma. They return to the rural areas

to hide, putting a burden on their older parents."

That's why he has devoted his life's work to highlighting the plight of Africa's seniors. He serves as chairman of the Presbyterian National Committee on Ageing in Ghana, and is founder of the Christian Action on Ageing in Africa. In 2009, he was elected president of the African Association of Pastoral Studies and Counselling, and has written five books on the subject.

“ Families used to live together, but the young people are leaving rural areas, and the old people are abandoned ”

Although the PCC has an established partnership with Ghana, its programs do not specifically target seniors—save for a new Presbyterian World Service and Development project in Gambaga which supports women ostracized from their villages on charges of witchcraft.

"People lack an understanding of the ageing process," he said. "So when old people behave poorly, they think it's witchcraft and they banish them."

He is helping to educate villages on diseases like depression, dementia and Alzheimer's—so these problems can be helped rather than feared.

International Ministries helped print Ayete-Nyampong's first book, and provided funds so he could attend international meetings on ageing. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record's* senior writer.

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Communications Office  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



# The Other Six Days

PIZZA AND PAMPERS.

BY BRADLEY CHILDS

## CULTURE-IZED COMMUNION?

Can communion elements be culture-ized or, by doing so, does the meal cease to be the Lord's Supper? Can a Japanese church use rice and sake? A youth group pizza and coke? There is something unsettling about this question but, at the same time, if your church is using bread made with yeast instead of "unleavened bread" aren't you already doing this to some extent?

## CHRISTIAN KITSCH

From catholicshopper.com come these wonderfully silly figurines. You can get Jesus helping ballerinas or Jesus helping kids golf. And lest they forget the Canadians, they have Jesus in a face-off too!

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## QUOTE

**Peter Marchall:** "Billy Graham recently called it 'our great hope in a confusing and ever-changing world.'"

**Paul Lynde:** "What is 'it?'"

**Peter Marchall:** "Pampers."

## ANNOY YOUR MINISTER

"The Lord was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had chariots of iron."

—Judges 1:19

## LIVE PREACHING ONLINE

From author and Baptist minister Gordon Atkinson comes reallivepreacher: a webpage and blog with articles, conversations, sermons, questions, recipes, book reviews, interviews and a video Bible study.

**FIND IT @** [reallivepreacher.com](http://reallivepreacher.com) ■

*Bradley Childs is studying at Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

# New Growth in Guatemala

**PWS&D** is supporting marginalized people in Guatemala through a comprehensive program that is successfully boosting agriculture production, providing skills training and teaching how to improve nutrition. Working in partnership with the Maya-Mam Association for Research & Development (AMMID), 100 families are learning soil and water conservation techniques, growing vegetables, creating organic fertilizer and planting trees. Over 80 women, previously dependent on their husbands, are now learning high-quality handicraft skills, and seven primary schools are participating in growing projects to teach children how to grow the necessary foods for a more complete diet.

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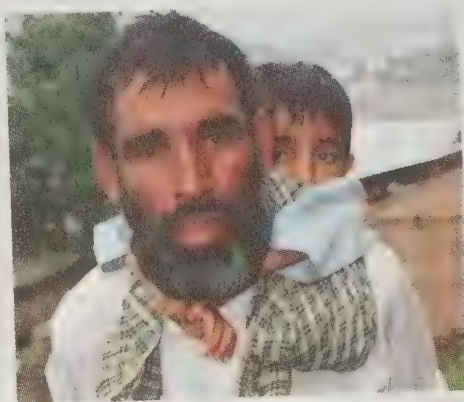


## Letter from Pakistan

# Tragedy Strikes Again

MASSIVE FLOODING LATEST DISASTER IN PAKISTAN. BY SHAMA MALL

IT IS AUG. 14, Pakistan's Independence Day. Images of the mass exodus across the Pakistan-India border 63 years ago are repeated today, as millions of people are on the move to escape what are being called the "super" floods. With few or no belongings, people travel on foot, carts, tractors, pick-up trucks, or however their means allow. Their homes, possessions, livestock and livelihoods that took a lifetime to build have been washed away within a matter of days. Scenes of desperation are all too vivid, leading to chaos at distribution sites or passing relief convoys; starvation is driving people to grab whatever they can to feed their hungry children. Besides the loss of roughly 1,600 lives, approximately 20 million people have been affected by the floods so far.



Every age has been affected by floods in Pakistan.

At the beginning of August, the country experienced unusually heavy monsoon rains that caused major rivers to overflow, resulting in massive flooding across four provinces. In Baluchistan, earlier flooding in June as a result of cyclone Phet compounded the damage. According to the UN, the number of people affected is more

than the combined disasters of the 2004 tsunami, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and the 2010 Haiti earthquake, in addition to the three million people displaced in 2009 due to the conflict in the northern areas of Pakistan. The scale of flooding is making relief efforts difficult; many people remain stranded due to severe damage to roads and bridges.

As a 50-year-old widow from Punda Balla Village, Mehr Nisar shared her account with the Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan team, which is carrying out relief work supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development. She says, "I lost my husband in the earthquake, and I was living in a pre-fabricated shelter with my son after that. This has now been destroyed as half of the land under the shelter was washed away."

CWS has been working in Pakistan for over 50 years; PWS&D has been committed to supporting not only emergency relief over the last six or seven years, but also helping us tackle long-term development challenges.

Prior to the floods, CWS and PWS&D were working on improving peoples' access to nutritious, safe foods amongst some farming communities. The floods pose a major challenge to this work since more than 1.4-million acres of croplands were destroyed, as well as the year's reserves that communities store for their own sustenance. So while the country struggles to cope with the immediate needs of the millions who have been displaced, combined efforts and commitments will need to focus on long-term development needs. ■

Shama Mall is deputy director of Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan

## Continuing Education February 14 - 18, 2011

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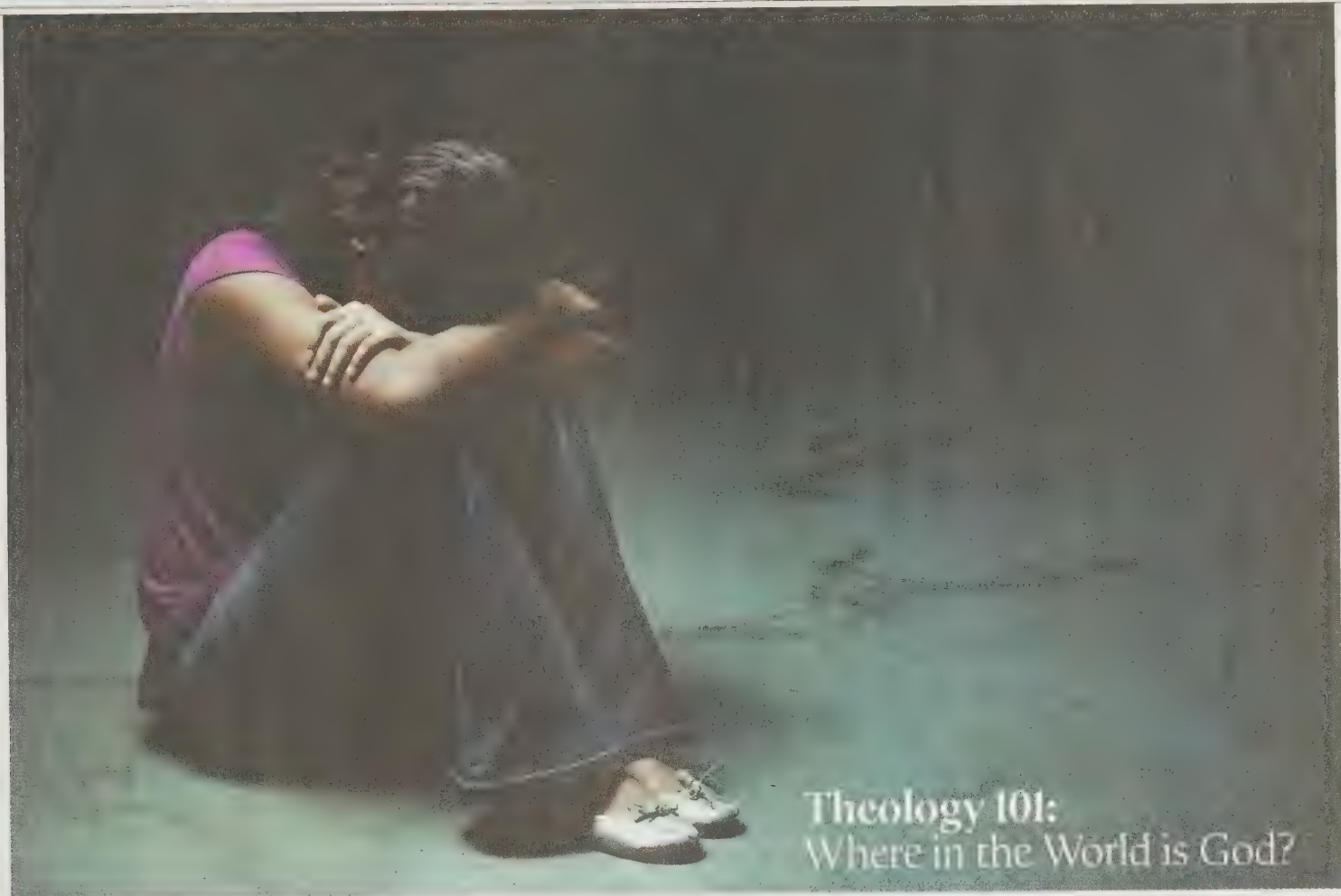
### Mark your calendars!

- **Gary Badcock**, Professor of Theology, Huron University College — on CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
- **Nancy Calvert-Koyzis**, Minister in Association, Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton Ontario — on WHAT'S NEW IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES
- **Samuel Calian**, President Emeritus of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary — on LEADERSHIP
- **David Jacobsen**, Professor of Homiletics, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary — on PREACHING AND WORSHIP

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Theology 101:  
Where in the World is God?

## Soaked in Tears

WHERE IS GOD IN OUR SUFFERING? BY NICK ATHANASIADIS

**IN OUR PARTICULAR** life in the world—from the slow breakdown of a relationship, to years of physical abuse, from sudden accidents which devastate a family, to illness and death, to plagues and genocide and war—suffering due to sin and evil is our intense experience. In response, people of faith, as well as those who struggle with their faith, and even those without a working faith ask: “Where is God?” People asked it after 9/11, after the earthquake in Haiti, after a child is abused and murdered—where is God? How does faith in God make sense on a planet soaked in tears from crust to

core? We hope this is a straightforward question which requires a straightforward answer. Yet great art, scholarship and of course sacred texts and world religions have grappled with this very issue from prehistory. All come to the conclusion that easy answers will not be forthcoming. Where does evil come from? Why do the cruel seem to prosper in God’s good creation? Where is God when we are hurting? In the space of this column, we may only take up the last of these questions.

There is us and there is our pain and there is God. The connection between the first two terms appears straight-

forward: we feel pain, indeed if it is deep enough it breaks the limits of our humanity, and some human beings are broken beyond any apparent wholeness. But where is God? God is not present as a *deus ex machina*, a being who appears on the stage in the ►

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## We feel pain, indeed if it is deep enough it breaks the limits of our humanity

climax of a tragic play to make all things well to the satisfaction of the audience. The book of Job makes clear that the god Job was worshipping, sacrificing to and trying to placate was a god made in Job's image, or the image of the wisdom of the day. Indeed there is a God beyond what Job and his friends could conceive. When Job finally gets a glimpse not before but in the very midst of his terror, when the unnamable One is revealed within the whirlwind, Job, the man who knows human anguish from the inside, confesses that he does not know: "I have spoken of the unspeakable and tried to grasp the infinite." (Job 42:3)

That being confessed, is that it? Is that where we are left in our own anguish?

The answer in our scriptures is, no! A world deformed by suffering and broken by evil requires not only insight but redemption. And so God incarnates God's self in the world as compassion. Jesus' story of the compassionate Father (better known as the Prodigal Son) is the manifestation of compassion as forgiveness. Here the guilt of the younger son manifest in his own degradation, as well as the devastation his actions cause to his family

and village, is absorbed by the father in the costly forgiveness, welcome and restoration of his son. Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan manifests compassion as care for a bleeding mass of flesh left for dead by the side of the road. Compassion is not only suffering with, compassion effects actual change; at great cost it restores what evil and suffering have devastated. This restoration happens not "in the sweet by and by" but in the here and now.

Ultimately for Christians, God assumes our suffering in the Christ. In history, in the midst of concrete suffering, demons are exorcised, the sick are healed, oppressors are confronted and sin is forgiven. God labours in the world to mediate the transformative power of compassion. On the cross, evil is transmuted into God's own suffering. Evil is not perpetuated, it is absorbed. This is the divine response in the world in the face of radical evil. All the evil in the world cannot overwhelm the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. After listing the reality of suffering, from hardship to the sword, the Apostle Paul asks: can any and all of this together "separate us from the love of Christ?" Then he affirms what has been revealed to him in his own life and body: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

These are not easy words to express. We receive them as a word from the Lord to us, because we know human beings can be broken by suffering. There are front-line caregivers who work with victims of torture, those who work with traumatized soldiers, those who work in the rehabilitation of prisoners, who testify to the reality that some people will never be whole again. If we deny this reality, compassion can degenerate

into sentimentality. Within the Christian tradition, such persons are at the foot of the cross, they are closest to Jesus who cried out: "Why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) They may come to taste the divine love in the very centre of their souls, even when they have lost everything else, including their dignity. In such circumstances the exchange of compassion from one human being to another is nothing other than a dying to self. Simone Weil, the French activist and mystic, called this form of compassion "attention." In touching the afflicted with their eyes or their hands, what those who practice attention are in fact doing is "very different from feeding, clothing, or taking care of them." Through the practice of attention they enter those they help and "give them for a moment—what affliction has deprived them of—an existence of their own."

God is not present as a benevolent deity manipulating history or nature to prevent the suffering of creatures who feel pain, nor a cosmic magician who makes our anguish disappear. God is present in the poor, the sick, the imprisoned and the hungry, but God is also present in the power of compassion extended to each of the least of these. (Matthew 25:40) God entered time and space in the Christ in whom evil was absorbed and death was defeated, and God continues to be present, even in a fragmentary way, in communities gathered by the power of the Spirit to bear the suffering of the world. Finally, the defeat of evil on the cross, and the defeat of death in the resurrection, is God's promise to us that though we live in real time within a veil of tears, suffering does not have to define us nor does it have the final word on us. The final word belongs to the One who has created us and redeems us in costly love from which nothing can separate us. ■

*Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis is minister at Leaside, Toronto.*





Freedom from Want, by Norman Rockwell, for  
*The Saturday Evening Post*, March 6, 1943

# It's Not (Just) About Thanksgiving

IT'S ABOUT GOING ON, WITH JESUS, INTO A WORLD MADE NEW. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

October 10, 2010 reading

Thanksgiving / Pentecost 20  
Luke 17:11-19

**T**his year the lectionary bumps right into Canadian Thanksgiving. We often choose this gospel when we leave the cycle of readings to mark what is, after all, not a Christian

holy day. This text is easily skewed toward a Thanksgiving sermon. After all, the 10th man, the formerly leprous Samaritan double-outcast turns back, praises God with a loud voice, falls at Jesus' feet, and thanks him!

First, let's blow off the whiff of anti-Semitism that creeps into our reading and preaching this text. It's too easy to make this a good foreigner versus bad Judeans, old religion versus new moral tale. Sure, the other

nine men don't come back to thank Jesus. Assuming they're all Jews, they go to do what the tradition requires. They're not really clean until the rightful authorities say so. They do what Jesus tells them to do! And they're already healed!

Does this man stop when he realizes he can't go with the others to show himself to their religious authorities? Or does he turn around because he understands more of what Jesus ➤





Thanksgiving, by Norman Rockwell, *Literary Digest*, Nov. 22, 1919

## At Thanksgiving we celebrate earth's abundance in general, and our large share of it in particular

has done for him? Made clean, healed in body, he's also now whole.

Yes, he can go home again. But that's not all there is to wholeness. He'll return to play his part as a brother, a son, maybe even a father. He'll turn his part of the world

upside down. That community sent him out there. Will they welcome him back?

The nine aren't guaranteed a warm welcome, either. Their community followed the rules and put them in their places. With or without priestly sanction, the community will decide where they belong now.

Miracles cause problems. Healing changes things. You can go home again. But things will never be the same. Some of us just don't get that. Is the real contrast between the nine and the one found in the readiness of nine to seek restoration, and the readiness of one for re-creation? In gospel stories (especially Luke's) it's usually the outsider, the least likely one who gets the gospel. Those who should already know really don't.

At Thanksgiving we celebrate earth's abundance in general, and our large share of it in particular. We look around and think, if not say, "There but for the grace of God ..." We look back 12 months and breathe a sigh of relief. A year has passed without too much loss, too much suffering, just

enough strength to endure. Good year or bad, we give thanks for what we've held on to. Especially after a bad year. Thanksgiving is the most conservative celebration of all!

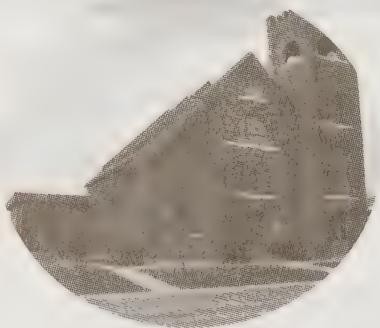
When we go to church on Thanksgiving Sunday, will we be like the nine, off to do the right, religious thing? Will we go to give our God the thanks expected for what God has done for us? Or will we go to lay our whole lives before God open to what God has yet to do in and through us?

We'll gather around our groaning boards, delighted by the overabundance on display, and pray we won't eat too much. Will our table-talk deafen us to the rapping at the window? Will we see him? He's out there. Yes, still outside our ordered, bounded reality. The 10th man. Calling us to join with him in thanking and praising God, whose gracious power makes all things new.

Back to the story. When this man turns back to Jesus he takes his first step forward into a new world. He lays his whole life at Jesus' feet. That's an image of discipleship. He opens himself to what Jesus has yet to accomplish in and through him. His thanksgiving begins with what has just happened to him and goes on into the future now open to him.

This story isn't (just) about gratitude for what is, and what has been. It's about going on, with Jesus, into a world made new. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*



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John Knox during one of his interviews with Mary, Queen of Scots. Circa 1562.

# The Standard

PRAYER, WORD AND SACRAMENT. **BY CALVIN BROWN**

**THIS YEAR CELEBRATES** the 450th anniversary of the establishing of our ecclesiastical mother as the national Church of Scotland. We can't help but think of the principal architect of that church, John Knox, in whose honour many of our congregations are named. Knox is caricatured as a harsh person who was uncompromising and strict. The truth was he was persistent and earnest and this always appears a negative thing to those who are looking for loopholes that essentially allow them to act and

think as they please. What they don't realize is that Knox was as strict with himself as he was with anyone else. In his famous encounter with the young but strong-headed Mary, Queen of Scots, he answered her accusation of rebellion by saying: "God forbid that ever I take it upon me to command any to obey me, or to set subjects at liberty to do whatever pleases them. But my travel is that both princes and subjects must obey God."

In other words there was one standard for all—God's word revealed in

holy scripture. That has been the standard in our church ever since and at the last assembly this was once again confirmed in the report of the church doctrine committee. Indeed, that is one of the pillars of our Reformed faith. It is this commitment that keeps us on track. If ever we wander from that we will simply become like those whom the Bible describes with pity as "doing what is right in their own eyes." Human self-determination is what led to the need of the church to reform in the first place. Scotland ➤



only recovered as they returned to the ways of Christ.

So also today in both the mother church and our own church there is a need not merely to affirm the old statements but to become passionate in studying and living out the word of God—only then will we see the renewal needed to revive the church. Sometimes we try new programs or we try to fan the flames of enthusiasm, or we make sincere resolutions but it is all to no avail unless we have a passion for the word of God and a deep conviction of its needfulness in our lives. In many parts of the church this is sadly lacking. Most churches have only one or two

Bible studies and some have none at all. Some report having Bible studies but they are really book studies and some of those by authors who have wandered seriously into non-biblical theologies.

Recently a reader sent me the following quote that affirms this same idea: “Revival, like a genuine conversion, is wrought of God, by means of the word—the word applied by the Holy Spirit of course. Therefore, there is something more needed (on our part) than prayer: the word of God must have a prominent place, *the* prominent place. Without that there will be no revival, whatever excitement and activities of the

emotions there may be.”—*Eternal Punishment* by Arthur Pink, Reiner Publications.

Reformed Christians from the beginning have insisted on regular and earnest use of the means of grace which are described as prayer, the word (preached and read), and the sacraments. There are no substitutes for these basic spiritual practices that Jesus taught and John Knox reminded us of. The word is to be prayed into being. Jesus taught us to pray: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The word is to be shared. Jesus gives us the great commission to go and preach and make disciples.

The word is to be enacted. Jesus said: “Do this in remembrance of me.” We remember not only as we take the bread and wine at the table but each moment of each day as we go into the world filled with his Spirit.

Let us who seek the renewal of the church commit ourselves with our forebears to pray the word into being, to share the word with friends and neighbours and to enact the word in our communities, and then we shall see more of the hand of God on us than we can ever imagine. ■

.....  
Rev. Calvin Brown is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC; [renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca](http://renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca)

## Presbyterian Record's Annual Virtual Christmas Choir

**Entry Deadline: November 15, 2010**

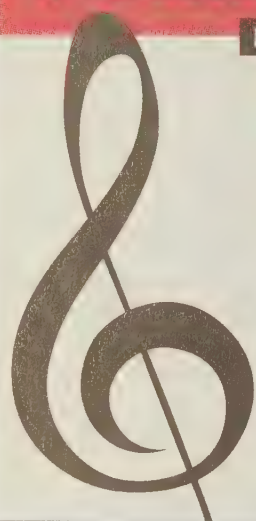
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# Exciting Times

PHYLLIS TICKLE AND THE GREAT EMERGENCE BY FAIRLIE RITCHIE

## Phyllis Tickle,



lay eucharistic minister in the American Episcopal Church, author and feminist, spoke in Toronto in May. "[History will, I wager] see the [past] half century as having been more comparable to the upheavals of Europe during the Christian Reformation ... than to anything else." Tickle, in her book *The Great Emergence*, sees the history of Christianity in 500-year cycles—prior to our age, the Great Reformation, prior to that, the Great Schism between the Greek and Latin church, prior to that, Gregory the Great, and so forth.

We are in the latter stages of the Great Emergence, she argues. And, she finds this an exciting time to be part of church. Not easy. Not comfortable. Some of us in longstanding denominations may worry about membership losses.

Every 500 years the church has a rummage sale. It pulls everything from the attic, sends some to the dumpster, recycles wonderful stuff it had forgotten, and puts the rest out for others who may see a fresh use. In every one of these rummage sales to date, the entrenched form of faith has lost pride of place, and a vital new form has come to pre-eminence.

For instance, in the Reformation, Martin Luther's doctrine of *sola scriptura* came to the centre and displaced Roman Catholicism. But the latter did not disappear. Rather, it deepened and spread into new geographic and demographic areas.

But Charles Darwin and the physicist Michael Faraday punctured traditional beliefs about creation; Albert Einstein and Werner Heisenberg recognized that all is relative to the observer—there is no absolute truth; Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung opened up the unconscious; and Joseph Campbell's study of comparative religions questioned Christianity as the one true religion.

All of these developments rocked the authority of the Bible as sole arbiter of belief and behaviour. Yet simultaneously they may have freed up the Spirit to enliven God's people in a host of ways. The Pentecostal movement, unprecedented since the early church, claims direct contact with the Holy Spirit. Alcoholics Anonymous confront addicts with the belief that only God can help them. An increased awareness of Buddhism has conveyed a wisdom and vocabulary to describe and nurture the Holy Spirit. House churches have evolved into a "new monasticism," a "way of being in which Christians, bound together under vows of stability, live out their private lives together in radical obedience to the great commandment." Such varied expressions pick up practices, people, and ideas from all sectors of the church, and pour them out as a new and emerging way of being Christian.

But where are the once mainline churches in all this? Some Christians from every denomination have pushed back "violently," but other

traditionalists are simply comfortable with things the way they have been. Tickle blesses these as needed ballast, providing stability in the upheaval. Then there are re-traditioning and progressive Christians, who want to delve into the inherited church for all the life that has been ignored. And there are the "hyphenateds," members of traditional denominations who also sense a call to the emerging church.

What has happened to *sola scriptura*? For Tickle, it seems focused "in scripture and the community." This community, the church, is not a "thing" but a network. It is totally egalitarian, for no one has the full truth. "The duty, the challenge, the joy and excitement of the Church and for the Christians who compose her, then, is in discovering what it means to believe that the kingdom of God is within one and in understanding that one is thereby a pulsating, vibrating bit in a much grander network."

It is indeed an exciting time to be part of church, part of this "movement toward a system of ecclesial authority that waits upon the Spirit and rests in the interlacing lives of Bible-listening, Bible-honouring believers." Not easy. Not comfortable. But exciting. Compelling. Gospel. ■

Rev. Fairlie Ritchie lives in Toronto.





# Healing at the Forks

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION STARTS AGAIN IN WINNIPEG. BY VIVIAN KETCHUM

*THE FIRST DAY* of the event was bright and sunny, then the next two days were gusty and rainy, as if Mother Earth was there to grieve with us. The tents were snapping as the winds blew through them. When a survivor got up to share her story, a strong gust of wind moved through the tent, snapping the canvas and adding emphasis to her words. On the last day, the sun returned; the healing of this history was strengthened by the sharing of stories.

Although the weather was windy and rainy, the atmosphere was

colourful. I saw a minister wearing his white collar with his black outfit walking down the path. The minister's clothing and what he chose to wear on this day may have seemed an odd choice for this special event. This was an event where former residential school survivors are mingling with former teachers and church members. Memories of past and present are on the minds of all.

I could hear the drummers pound on the drums at the sacred fire in the background. The beat is what we aboriginals like to refer to as our

"Mother's heartbeat." The pounding beat was soothing to listen to as I stood surrounded by memories of residential schools, the minister in his clothing, the old pictures of the schools posted in the tents and the shared stories of other survivors. There is the smell of wood smoke coming from the sacred fire bringing its own fond memories of home. Of my mom and dad, and the old wood stove that sat in the middle of our home. My own strength is not enough to bear sharing my story with others; I need these memories to help cope with the opening of old wounds.



## I need these memories to help cope with the opening of old wounds

I saw fresh tears on the faces of other residential school survivors and all it took was a quick glance to see the mirrored story of inner pain in that person's eyes. As survivors, we are all at different stages in our healing journey, some are able to share their stories with laughter, others with a hint of anger.

Sadly, I didn't see any of my former dorm mates who attended Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School. Many of them died at an early age. I did meet friends from my hometown of Kenora, Ont., who attended Cecilia Jeffrey at different times. As I walked about the Forks soaking up the atmosphere, my thoughts were of my mom, dad and other survivors who didn't live to see this day come about—their voices and stories forever silenced.

I was there to share my story of working with the Presbyterian Church, but I was hoping to see Nancy Morrison, a respected elder from Kenora. She was also a friend of my mom's; they both attended St. Mary's Residential School. Nancy was 81 years old, but very active in her community. I heard her speak on the third day. I was once again a student of her words, listening to a respected elder share her teachings.

One aboriginal man in his early 50s sang a healing song in his own language in the interfaith tent. I was able to understand some of the words and it brought tears to my eyes. A Presbyterian minister came over to where I was standing and held me while I wept. My tears were not hidden; the moment for secrets is long past. Now I can shed my tears without shame. ■

.....  
*Vivian Ketchum is a residential school survivor and healing and reconciliation volunteer leader.*



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# Experiences Of Ecumenism

JOURNEYING TOWARD UNITY, NOT UNIFORMITY. BY LORI RANSOM

**T**wo events, each the culmination of two years of preparation, took place this June on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

Nearly 300 people from 60 nations met in Scotland to mark the centenary of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. Two Canadian Presbyterians, Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace and I, took part.

The 1910 conference, attended by 1,200 mostly Protestant European-descended men, is widely remembered as significant to the birth of international ecumenism. The minority voice of V.S. Azariah of India is often cited as particularly inspiring: "The exceeding riches of the glory of Christ can be fully

realized not by the Englishman, the American, and the continental alone, nor by the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Indians by themselves—but by all working together, worshipping together, and learning together the perfect image of our Lord and Christ."

I was privileged to lead one of nine study groups. Our paper, the joint effort of many authors, mostly Canadian, focused on the history of residential schools in Canada as a case study on power relationships in mission. You can read the report online at: [edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/mission-and-power.html](http://edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/mission-and-power.html)

Two weeks later, I found myself among an equally international but

theologically closer family of Christians gathered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The new organization is a merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council, uniting 80 million Reformed Christians, from 230 member denominations in 108 countries.

Grand Rapids may be well remembered for placing a spotlight on the indigenous peoples of North America and their experience of Christianity. Delegates were welcomed to Michigan by tribal chiefs, attended workshops on indigenous rights, listened to a keynote address by Oglala Lakota/Sioux



theologian, Richard Twiss, and enjoyed a traditional powwow in downtown Grand Rapids.

Twiss pulled no punches describing the historical impact of Christian evangelism on indigenous peoples:

"Theology was captured by the cowboys ... the conglomeration of Euro-American scholars, ministers and lay folk ... have, over the centuries, used their economic, academic, religious and political dominance to create the illusion that the Bible, read through their experience, is the Bible read correctly.

"Jesus was a black-haired, black-eyed and dark-skinned tribal, indigenous, aboriginal, native, First Nations boy ... He was given tribal names: Bright and Morning Star, the Rock, Rose of Sharon, Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Chief Cornerstone, Daystar and many more.

"Jesus did not feel ashamed, like a second-class citizen ... because ... God-the-Father was not embarrassed by His son's obvious ethnic identity."

The WCRC delegates welcomed Twiss' message and, in keeping with V.S. Azariah's words of a century ago, agreed that the leadership of our new communion requires perspectives from the entire human family. Indigenous peoples will note this was supported through the election of Cree Canadian (and Presbyterian) Rev. Mary Fontaine to the WCRC executive.

Looking to identify some powerful words from Edinburgh, I observed that Metropolitan Dr. Geevarghese Mor Coorlios (from India, representing the World Council of Churches) hit a collective nerve. He elaborated on keynote speaker Dana Robert's suggestion that 1910's "macro context" was colonization and 2010's is globalization, saying:

"Passion for evangelism and [the] quest for social justice should be held together.

"The representation of [the] global south in this conference

may have significantly increased from that of 1910, but the question is whether the pressing concerns of the global south such as poverty, economic and social injustice, ecological violence and marginalization of indigenous peoples actually form the main mission agenda."

His message is the message of the Accra Confession (affirmed in Grand Rapids): to remember the downsides of the history of Christian complicity with colonial powers as we navigate Christian engagement with the global power structures of our own day—lest our descendants in the Christian community, 100 years from now, lament and feel a need to repent of how we are acting, or not acting, in our context and relationships with the powers of today. What is our ongoing need for redemption?

In confessing our complicity with colonialism in the form of residential schools, the Presbyterian Church in Canada said we ignored prophetic voices of the time who told us what we were doing in the schools was causing harm. Are Twiss, Roberts, and Mor Coorlios prophetic voices of today?

Twiss said: It's high time we focused our attention on non-Western interpretations of the Bible. Our worldviews are still shaped by those who live in places of economic and political power. We are ignoring the majority of those who live on this planet. Mor Coorlios agreed—challenging us to be honest about whose interests we put first when we make decisions about how we live.

In Canada, most of us can claim to be among the most advantaged peoples on the planet. We are comfortable. Twiss and Mor Coorlios would say complacent.

Yet, rather quietly, the Reformed family agreed in Grand Rapids to work towards the establishment of a new world economic order. They agreed that Christians are called to do this by God.

"[The policy committee] calls upon WCRC and its member churches in

**It's high time we focused our attention on non-western interpretations of the Bible. Our worldviews are still shaped by those who live in places of economic and political power**

cooperation with [partner] organizations to prepare a global ecumenical conference to propose framework and criteria for a new international financial and economic architecture that is based on the principles of economic, social and climate justice, serves the real economy, is accounting for social and environmental risks, sets clear limits to greed," reads [reformedchurches.org/docs/PolicyCommittee.pdf](http://reformedchurches.org/docs/PolicyCommittee.pdf)

This bold statement expresses anything but comfort and complacency. Still one wonders, what will they say about us in 2110? Will they repent or rejoice over actions taken, or not taken?

Edinburgh and Grand Rapids challenged us to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit in each other. Each event brought together a plethora of voices which together said that the pursuit of Christian unity will help us witness to Christ today, remembering that Christian unity is the antithesis of Christian uniformity. ■

*Lori Ransom is the PCC's healing and reconciliation animator.*





# Mission, Mission, Mission

YOUR CHURCH DOESN'T HAVE TO DIE. BY DOUG CHARRETT

*ST. PAUL'S, PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.,* could have died, but through valiant effort and a strong faith in God many people—men, women, and clergy—were able to persevere. Today at 143 years of age, we are still a viable community-based church.

St. Paul's has been affected, just like others, by a general decline in attendance. The Sunday school and the church choir became inactive. Older church members who had been christened and married in St. Paul's were overheard saying, "As long as the church is still here till they bury me, that's all I ask." Remarks like this triggered many session meetings that went on for hours discussing the future of the church.

Should we just close the church? Should we sell the church building and property and move to the suburbs? But where in the suburbs? Should we limp along until there is no more money and then close the church doors? Because St. Paul's was the only Presbyterian church in Prince Albert where all Presbyterians could come, why not look upon the church as a "cathedral?" It certainly had many of the attributes of a cathedral—an elegant sanctuary, beautiful stained glass windows, massive organ pipes, crafted pulpit chairs and a classic architectural exterior. This concept seemed to be the spark that ignited new life into the church.

A session meeting was held using a think tank format. Everything was on the table for discussion. Participants were asked to prepare a list of all those activities that had occurred in the church. Yes, there was no Sunday school or choir; but once people got talking, a host of activities, both past and present were discussed. A decision was eventually made to reorganize the operating structure of the church, so four main committees were formed with session at the head: worship and nurture, mission and outreach, finance and maintenance, and policy and planning. Each committee had its own area of church life to organize and spearhead and each committee chair from time to time would take a few moments at the church service to explain their activities to the congregation.

It wasn't long before the church family began to realize that maybe St. Paul's wasn't in as much trouble as was originally thought. We could become a mission church again and reach out to local aboriginal people and others. So the congregation began to grow again. A Sunday school began to emerge and a youth group is in the planning stages. The mission and outreach team swung into action and partnered with Riverside Community School to provide gallons of nutritious soup for hungry students at lunch, as well as cookies, milk and apples for breakfast. Many of the students





Mission work at St. Paul's.

are being raised by grandmothers, so they were invited to share in these two important meals of the day. Volunteers from St. Paul's visit Riverside to read to the younger students.

These outreach activities encouraged more activity in the church. The Sunday school is growing and now has up to 12 attending, increasing to over 20 at special Christmas and Easter services. Approximately 50 Christmas hampers are prepared by the church for needy families. The support staff and inmates at the local provincial jail also raise money to help the church provide the Christmas hampers. Members of the congregation make layettes for single mothers who are involved in the Family Futures organization.

The Christopher Lake summer camp is strongly supported by St. Paul's—our minister, Rev. Sandy Scott and his wife have participated in a marathon to raise funds for the camp. Coupled with funds raised within St. Paul's congregation and money raised from downtown business donations, a sizable amount is gathered each year. Shoeboxes are filled by the church each year to send to needy children at Christmas.

Special services are held to mark

occasions each year including a Christmas Eve candlelight service, an Easter service, a Robert Burns Sunday, and a Sunday to honour those who keep us safe—the police, ambulance personnel, firefighters and custodial workers. St. Paul's has held a Building Bridges Sunday with our aboriginal people, an all day event at Riverside Community School with talks and demonstrations focused on mutual understanding. The Presbyterian Men's Club of St. Paul's has taken the lead and organized family social outings throughout the year, such as bowling, curling and picnics.

St. Paul's, Prince Albert, did not die. With the help of the congregation and its leaders, the church has taken a close look at itself and found it has much to live for. That is good news, because there is continuing need for a Bible-centred, community-based church in Prince Albert, and it might as well be St. Paul's, the mother church of Presbyterianism in Saskatchewan. ■

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*Doug Charrett is a proud member of St. Paul's, Prince Albert, Sask.*

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# The Gu

LEARNING

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# ru Tour

TO LOVE

W FAIZ



When Gateway Community Church, Toronto, where I had been a worshipper, member and elder, over nearly 40 years, was dissolved by presbytery this summer, it was not a surprise, but it was a shock. Gateway had been a part of my identity, and not only spiritually, since I came to Canada. It had been an extension of my family. It had been a part of the landscape of my life.



# It

seems to me that we—you and I, our local church, our denomination—are constantly on the Emmaus Road: feeling forsaken and alone, incredulous that no one else understands our loneliness, mistaking that our depression is equivalent to faith. We sort of believe that Christ is walking with us, but we don't really believe it, because ... I mean, really ... we don't want to seem foolish.

Like the disciples who at first didn't recognize Jesus on that road, we at Gateway had scales blurring our vision. How we travelled to the point where they fell from our eyes is perhaps instructive for others in the church. It certainly fits in well with what I experienced at a number of conferences this year.

The Emmaus Road conference, sponsored by the national offices of the Presbyterian Church, with a chosen invite list of 17 presbyteries, was held in May at a resort an hour from Toronto. Immediately after was another conference in Winnipeg of theological educators discussing a popular book on native influence on Canadian society. A week later, yet another held by the Presbytery of Kingston for its 17 member churches. I went to all three—what I have jokingly taken to call my “Guru Tour,” since I witnessed several gurus of contemporary theology and critique of the church: Diana Butler Bass, Don Posterski, Bill Easum, John Ralston Saul, Terry LeBlanc, Karen Armstrong and Kennon Callahan. And, of course, a little later I was also at General Assembly.

In the back of my mind, on this guru tour, was Gateway, which had been on the precipice for years, perhaps decades, hobbling along. In the end, many of us could not agree on the reasons for the dissolution; some thought it was still viable. So, down to the wire there was disagreement and tension in the congregation. Still, there was also community, a sense of a shared adventure.

Gateway was a mission-church plant in 1967 in a new development, Flemingdon Park, near the church's national offices. It started in a mall basement but soon moved into

a small church. The founding members had links to the Presbyterian Church, but by the mid-70s, as the neighbourhood's demographics changed from middle-class young professionals to mostly new immigrants, so did the congregation's. I was amongst that new demographic. The congregation moved into a new building, built on municipal land and shared with a Roman Catholic congregation.

Gateway was a multicultural, multiethnic *mélange* of Reformed Christians worshipping in a mostly Presbyterian way. And while it was easy to spot the visible minorities, the “whites” were minorities as well. They were people who had felt ostracized by more established congregations—single moms, for example, or parents with children who were physically or mentally handicapped. This collection of outsiders found a home at Gateway and became leaders in the community. The initiating documents of almost every agency in Flemingdon Park—legal services, health centres, social services agencies, etc.—bear signatures of Gateway members.

I learned to be a Christian with this motley crew of church discards. Under the tutelage of ministers such as Rodger Talbot, Geoff Johnston and the then-radical husband and wife team of Brooke and Linda Ashfield, I learned that church was a place where one could ask questions (as a teenager I had many!), express doubts, pray, share, and act in the community. Gateway defined mission in every sense and was a fantastic lesson in faith for a young Christian.

But by the late 1980s something happened: perhaps we ran out of our luck, perhaps we were exhausted from all that community building—I don't know, but for the past two decades Gateway's pulpit was empty as often as not. We had bad luck—so we've always told ourselves: There was the minister who was diagnosed with a terminal illness her first week on the job; another who had alcohol problems. Or perhaps—I say perhaps—we made bad choices: There were missed opportunities to build community and ecumenical partnerships because either we were not flexible enough or the potential partners were just too demanding. To be fair, we also had a handful of ministers who provided us with great care and worship but they were either close to retirement or in the midst of their own



personal or career transitions.

With empty pulpits, our budget was kept low. We provided pastoral care to each other; we became adept at taking on different roles during worship. But, while we built a tight community amongst ourselves, our numbers declined steadily. Perhaps in providing care to the established members we failed in opening ourselves to new members. Or perhaps that's how potential new members interpreted our community.

Poll us on any given day however, and we were still community-minded, still eager to taste, study and share (but not necessarily spread) the word and the message. We were for Christ in our hearts but those outside of Gateway who observed our actions accused us of being only for ourselves. Tensions developed with presbytery and also with the national offices, since many in the congregation thought our mission funding should never have been pulled.

It's a chicken-and-egg question: Did the decline at Gateway start when the money slowed, or did the money slow because we lost our vision? Is it theological or administrative? Is it sheer bad luck or was Gateway Community Church dissolved because it ran itself into the ground? Or ... or, in our survival mentality, our depression, did we fail to recognize the one who was walking with us?

*This is the third time* I've heard Diana Butler Bass speak. Affable and approachable, she is on the road constantly guiding congregations and institutions to return to their spiritual roots. In the process of researching and writing her influential book, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, she learned, and she teaches in turn, that churches need to do a little work to return to their spiritual roots. She found that three interconnected "spheres of activity—practice, tradition and wisdom," when "intentionally engaged ... formed an architecture of vitality upon which congregations could build more vibrant communities."

Butler Bass emphasizes spiritual practices and their roots, not cultural practices. For her, vibrant congregations are the ones which engage their spirituality. And she

emphasizes vibrancy, not membership.

Bill Easum, also speaking at Emmaus, is a much sought church-growth consultant. He pushes the theme a little harder: "What if most of our churches are like the Church of Laodicea in Revelation [3:14-22]? What if we have underestimated the seriousness of our problem? What if our churches are dead and the only way forward is resurrection?" He states bluntly that we have forsaken Christ and need to renew that relationship. "Jesus was not a nice guy. Nice is not a word in the scriptures. There are only two or three people holding a church back from growth—the mean-spirited goodwill Christians." Reading deeply into the Emmaus Road story (Luke 24:13-35), which formed the theme for the conference, Easum argued that Christianity today is dead and depressed and needs to begin at the beginning, to return to the first century and walk with the risen Christ. "Don't do this if you have no spine."

Easum's model is entrepreneurial, very American, and very different from that of the Presbyterian Church. He often mocked committees; but he also offered a lot of practical tips, many of which came down to an old fashioned idea: evangelism. Ask a friend or co-worker to church. Radical stuff.

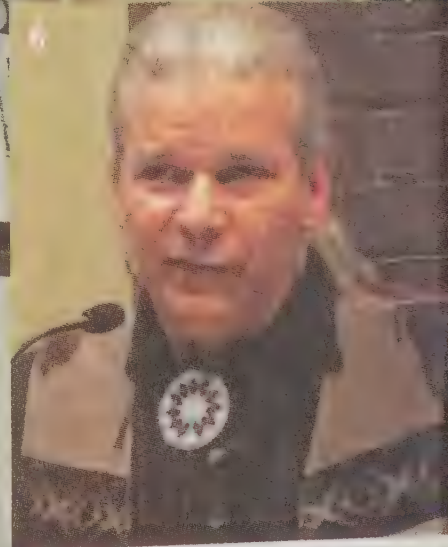
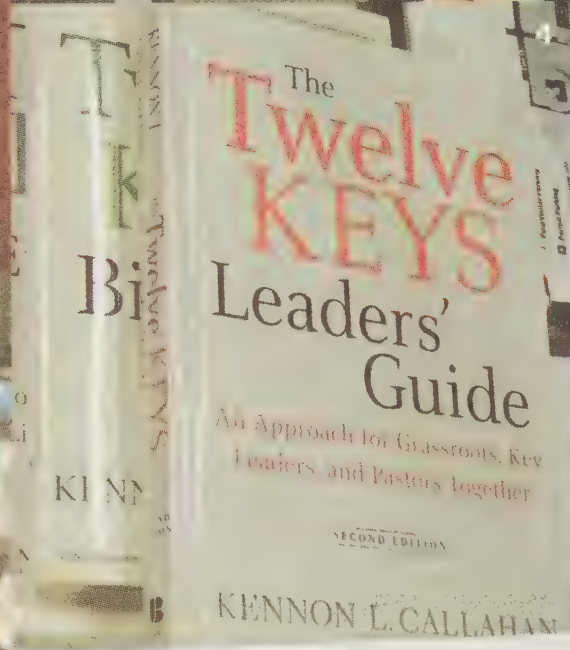
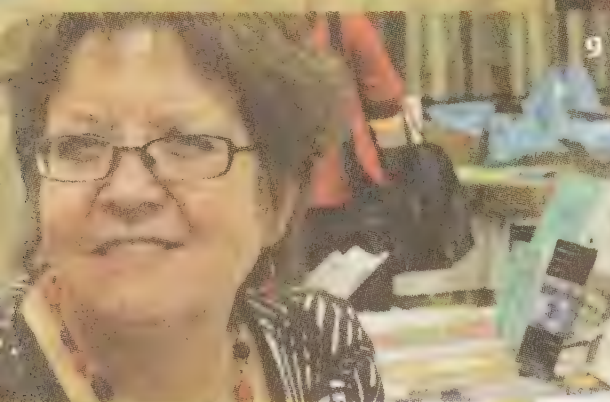
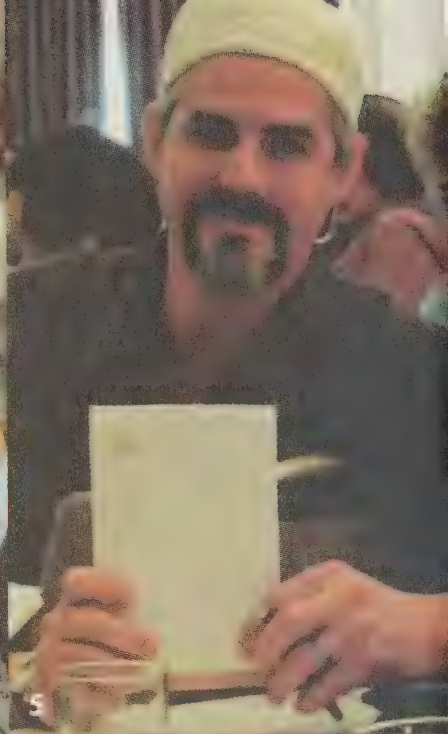
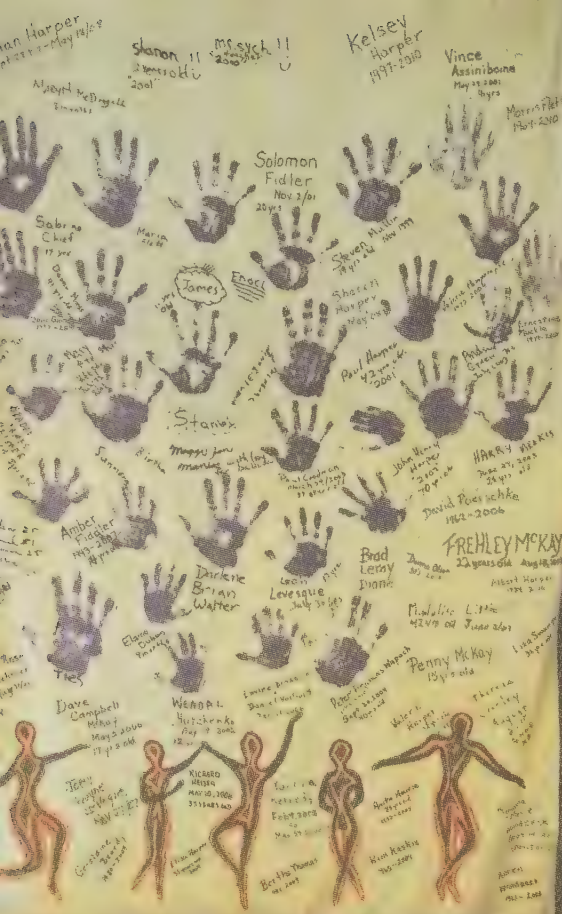
Don Posterski, a Canadian author, researcher and teacher, provided some statistical analysis and suggested church membership demographics are the same across denominational lines. It's just the way it is; so there is greater opportunity to engage society through, yes, spirituality and evangelism.

Posterski, by the way, opened his talk by mocking the *Record* for having too much theology.

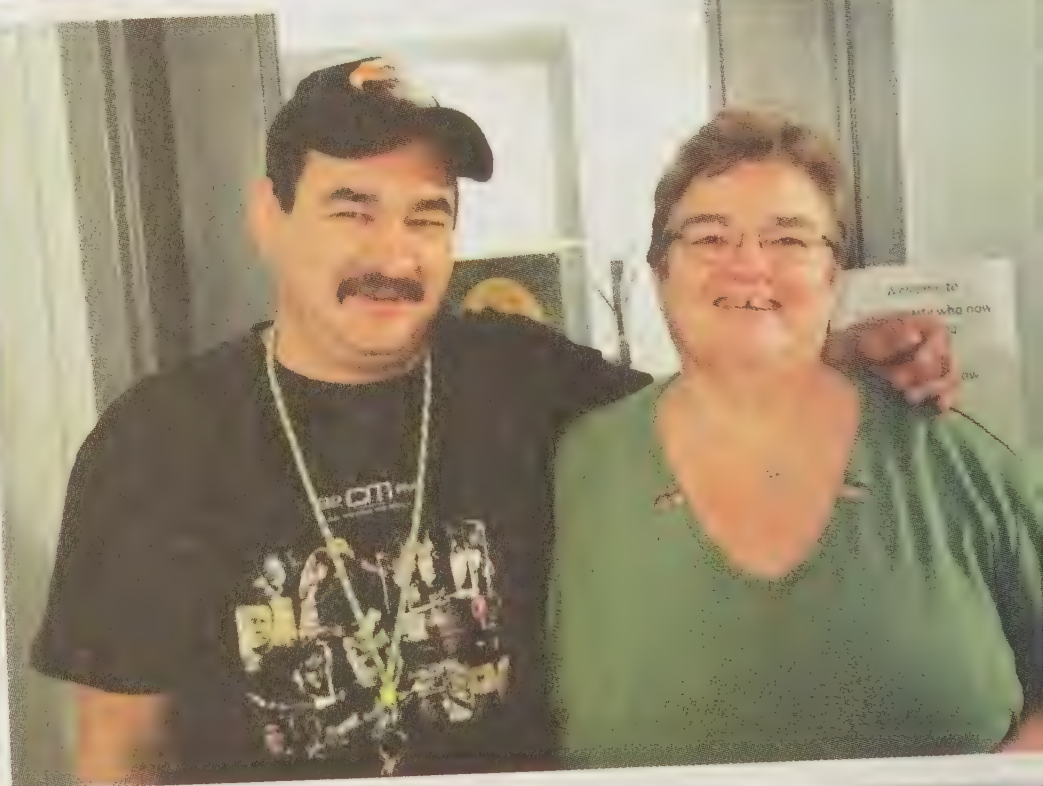
A week later in Kingston, Kennon L. Callahan dropped this little bomb: "Congregations don't die because people are lazy, apathetic or uncommitted. Congregations die because a group of dedicated, well intentioned people are working hard at things that worked 50 years ago." Callahan, speaking to the Kingston presbytery, is known to most Canadian Presbyterians through the Stewards by Design conferences.

In his book *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, he punches the guru-track message: "Strong, healthy congregations live in the grace of God. Weak, declining congregations ➤





From top left: 1. Rememberance tapestry, Winnipeg Inner City Mission 2. Listening in Kingston 3. Rev. Herb Gale and Rev. Ralph Kendall, Kingston 4. Books for sale, Kingston 5. Rev. Grant Gunnink, Emmaus Conference 6. Rev. Terry LeBlanc, Winnipeg 7. David L. and Rev. Margaret Mullin, Winnipeg 8. The Impromptu band, Emmaus 9. Bookseller to the PCC, the WMS's Susan Clarke





sometimes know the grace of God. Dying congregations occasionally sense the grace of God. ... Sometimes, we find grace. Sometimes, grace finds us. The gift of grace is not just a thing we do; it is a way we live."

So, if we accept our own anxiety that we are a declining denomination, then we must accept we have lost touch with the grace of God. In May 2009, the *Record* published a cover article that argued the same: According to the Natural Church Development's survey profile of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the denomination fell below the established average in all categories, was embarrassingly low in relationships, and pathetically crashed in the evangelism category. "The survey uncovered some interesting findings," the article stated, "respondents said they tend not to read the Bible privately or see it as a guide in their life. Nor are they inclined to share their faith experiences with other Christians. Prayer is not terribly inspiring for them and they are not confident others are praying for them. And they struggle with stewardship."

We deserve to be a declining denomination if we have lost confidence in the Bible. I realize it's a problematic book (or, rather, a collection of books), but it is our only text, the story of our story, the root of our faith. It is our guide to the grace of God, our entry to Christ. We lose the Bible, we lose prayer ... the dominoes fall in logical process. This is why Butler Bass takes us back to our historical and spiritual roots, why Easum insists we are at the same point where the first-century Church of Acts was, why Callahan speaks of beginning with grace. We have lost our way and we need to reclaim our path.

But, we have decades, if not centuries, of bad habits and corrosive culture to unpack. Callahan and Easum provide practical advice on how to rethink our process. Again, though—spoiler alert—evangelism is the key. But, don't worry, they don't make it scary.

*Someplace in the history,* culture and polity of the PCC, presbytery became the centre of our corporate structure. The Emmaus conference was designed for presbyteries, which had to audition to participate. Our presbyteries are meant to be support systems for congregations, and their ruling and teaching elders. They are meant to be the first line of care. Observation and experience suggest otherwise. In some presbyteries, congregations are hundreds of miles apart. In others there aren't enough teaching elders because the pulpits are empty. There isn't the time or,

more importantly, the personnel, to follow up on concerns or problems. Congregation members don't always understand the role of the presbytery—they're suspicious. Sometimes they are right to be suspicious, sometimes they are wrong. It's hard to know which scenario is at play. Presbyteries face every issue from alcoholism, adultery or fraud to church closings and church plantings.

The latter is both an art and a science and presbyteries do not necessarily have the resources to manage either. There are few resources for long-term planning on the presbytery level. Therefore, the process, though careful and deliberate, is taken to the financial bottom line: "Are the bills being paid? Yay? Nay? Next item on the agenda ..." Our presbyteries, particularly those in non-urban centres, are not equipped with the training, personnel or finances to grow their numbers. Our members are stressed, stretched thin and desperate. It is easier to shut a church down, cash in its resources and move on. Every presbytery has a variation on the same theme: folks can count the closings, but not the plantings, over the past 40 years. Another 40 years at this rate and the whole denomination will be able to meet in my backyard—it'll be some commute from Kamloops though.

Talking to participants at the Emmaus conference and sitting in on a half dozen presbytery meetings, I recognized many broken relationships. In one meeting, the presbytery members were barely civil to each other. There was a discernible divide between the big and small congregations, between the city and outlying congregations. The gathering crinkled with tension and it made me wonder how they met in full court.

I sat in on a meeting of the conference organizers and helpers. Rev. Wes Denyer spoke of systemic issues. "Is it the way we have set things up? Does the system itself create conflict?" Observed Rev. Marty Molengraaf: "The key is relationships—churches, buildings, programs, ministry, all hopefully sense God's presence." In another gathering, a near-retirement minister spoke of presbytery meetings long ago: "We used to meet regularly for socializing only. The rule was no talking business. And at the business meetings we would go around the circle and each member would talk about issues in their church. There was sharing. Without fellowship, business gets nit-picky."

Yet the answer is so simple. We can turn to our primary text—that's the other book in the pew, by the way, usually with gold embossing, over a thousand pages of onion paper and small print. We need to be in grace with God. We need to walk with Christ. We need to cast aside our culture and our habits. We need to do the little work involved in understanding prayer and hospitality and mission. We need to embrace our past, take ownership of ➤



## I can just see you rolling your eyes as you read this: “Those natives ...,” I hear you exclaim to yourselves, quietly in your thoughts

our sins, which have seeped into our collective denominational soul. We need, in short, to get over ourselves and get on with it. This is the punch line of the church growth, church renewal gurus I heard over two weeks.

And the story is not that dire. I give the example of two of several presbyteries which are very intentional in their efforts to look deeper into their process and practice. The first, of course, is the Presbytery of Kingston. As a presbytery they have envisioned a process, aided by Callahan, that goes beyond a week-long conference. They have worked for a year re-training themselves; they have taken their future into their own hands. (See page 42 for more.)

The other example is from the Presbytery of Winnipeg: There are 60,000 Filipinos in Winnipeg. Statistical analysis shows that two to three per cent of Filipinos are Protestant. That means there are as many as 1,000 Protestant Filipinos in Winnipeg. Starting on Mother's Day last year at Calvin church, a Tigala-speaking congregation was established. At the time of this writing, that service was attracting four dozen regular worshippers each week, which happens to be more than twice the number coming to the English worship in the morning.

And: The building for St. Andrew's is physically blocked on all sides. So, the congregation is selling it and the manse, and moving to a new building in a different part of town. It's pure Presbyterian pragmatism of the sort we have long forgotten. The congregation was at a point of deciding to close. Now with cash in hand they can begin anew with a mission plant. It's still St. Andrew's, Winnipeg, but without the building and its nostalgia and upkeep. They have freed themselves by using their own resources.

It can be done. A little imagination. A little daring. A lot of prayer. Having faith. Walking with Christ, in grace with God. It can be done.

*Between the Emmaus conference* and the Presbytery of Kingston conference I flew to Winnipeg to hear John Ralston Saul, the populist Canadian intellectual, speak to the Churches' Council on Theological Education in Canada about native influence on our nation. In *A Fair Country—Telling Truths About Canada*, the book under discussion, Saul argues that Canada is very different from other Western nations and that differ-

ence, our soulful belief in diversity, fairness and peace, is due entirely to the First Nations encountered by the first explorers. Four centuries may have passed, filled with endless rolls of immigration, but Canada is uniquely Canada because of those first encounters.

However, cultural, as well as financial and political pressure from the endless European, particularly British, immigration in the 19th-century, pushed the primacy of First Nations to the back of our national thoughts. Canada kept the teachings but forsook the people.

The next morning I went unannounced to meet some of these people at the Winnipeg Inner City Mission, which is supported by the PCC and helmed by the incomparable Rev. Margaret Mullin. The mission has in recent years gone through a capital campaign and built Place of Hope, a drop-in and housing project for native adults. On the side wall, in the drop-in area, is a tapestry commemorating the dead. Several family names are repeated; the youngest is a newborn. This is a dark legacy. I met several people who come daily to have a cup of coffee, check the job postings, just hang out. I met a couple of people who live there. They didn't have professional job skills, they struggled with a long personal and family history of substance abuse, depression and suicide and they had experienced death in their family, their circle of friends. This is the legacy of cultural evisceration—and I wasn't looking at statistical charts, I was standing face-to-face with fellow human beings. Their goals were modest, yet Promethean within their personal and cultural contexts.

David L. had just moved into the building the day I visited. He had applied to live there a while back. He had no fixed address, no cellphone, no email address. He had spent the previous months out of town with a dying friend. After burying his friend, he had no money to return to town. He had no idea he had an apartment waiting for him. Dogged by addiction, his life is constantly on the edge—if he can't make it back to town, he might lose the apartment, then he's on the streets again. Place of Hope is just that for David; it is a chance for him to build his life from scratch.

I can just see you rolling your eyes as you read this: “Those natives ...” I hear you exclaim to yourselves, quietly in your thoughts. “Get over it already; we said we're sorry. Can't we just move on?”



Marie Wilson, a commissioner with the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, responded to Saul the previous night, saying, "At the residential schools, a bad thing was done to a great many people, over a great period of time in a great country. But there were also some good things—friendships, relationships—struck in those schools. As has been said, the story is not linear, it is circular."

If all the gurus are correct and we need to walk in grace with God, then this is the deciding moment. We need to go deep into our philosophy, our theology, our practices and our culture and understand where we went so wrong that in the name of the risen Christ we did such horrible things for such a long time to people over whom we felt superior.

We need to redeem our past; that's the only way we can move into our future. Otherwise we will continue to work very hard, grinding our cultural assumptions, doing the things that don't work. This is our moment. It's about walking with Christ on a journey in the grace of God. It's that simple and that hard.

*I left the Winnipeg mission* and returned to the conference in time to hear Rev. Terry LeBlanc, director of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies, speaking of a burgeoning theology. A month later I would meet LeBlanc again at General Assembly as the recipient of the E.H. Johnson Award for being on the cutting edge of mission.

Like a true theologian, LeBlanc's talk began with setting down the background and framework of his subsequent thesis. This argument is first hinted at halfway through the talk. "The theological enterprise must move out of the third chapter [of Genesis] as the starting place for our articulation of the human situation, the situation of the rest of the creation. Rather, we should examine the beginning of the story with greater care, to ascertain the intention and expectation of the Creator."

What LeBlanc is saying is that our theology, our faith, does not and should not begin with the moment we broke our relationship with God—because that way back is deeply flawed—but with the moment God established a relationship with us, at the moment when God created and ➤

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## These young people are brilliant; certainly smarter than the generation of immigrants I grew up with.

saw that it was good. He argues that by starting with the Fall, Christianity has embraced a noxious dualism: seeing the world primarily in terms of good and evil. "Dualism is comfortably embedded in the foundations of Christian theology. It has become increasingly difficult therefore, to make sense of what, by means of contemporary science we are coming to discover is a far more interrelated cosmos than we had ever imagined."

Needless to say, LeBlanc's ideas flow forth from his First Nations' roots. He uses the spiritual ideas from one culture to imbue those of another. In so doing he's echoing the teachings of the others. Diana Butler Bass, at the Emmaus conference, had spent an extended session discussing Harvey Cox's *The Future of Faith*, which is a crash course in the history of Christian thought and practice. Cox breaks down 2,000 years into periods which suggest different theological interpretations of Christ. He argues we are now living in an experiential age, which is a logical extension of the Reformation and Enlightenment, since rationalism is never ultimately spiritually satisfying.

Phyllis Tickle (see page 23 for more) does a similar thing in *The Great Emergence*. So also Karen Armstrong in *The Case for God*, in which she responds to atheists like Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, essentially arguing that it is philosophical wrong-turns and not God which are at question.

And, of course, Kennon Callahan speaks of walking in grace with God; of developing that relationship. Bill Easum of beginning the journey on the right foot, with Christ. Diana Butler Bass about returning to early church rituals.

Karen Armstrong has few peers when it comes to popular yet deep writing about God. The former nun has written about Christianity, Islam and several other faiths, opening them up to outsiders and turning them upside down to insiders. She spoke at Queen's University in Kingston on the meaning of the word "belief." Like many English words it has morphed over the centuries. Belief is today considered an opinion or conviction and is often used to mean the opposite of fact or truth: you don't know, but you believe. Armstrong reminded listeners that "believe" grew out of the German "*lieben*," to love. Faith is an act of love.

Everything is relational. And all relationships begin with God—God, Christ and Spirit. I took the guru tour only to learn what I should have known all along. That is, what I should have learned from church, and what many non-goers expect church to teach. Instead it was the culture of church, not the spiritual relationship, which over time became the primary lesson.

*Gateway is dead.* Long live Gateway. The legal entity called Gateway Community Church is dissolved. In its stead stands Flemingdon Gateway Mission, which serves the youth and children of the large multicultural, multiethnic neighbourhood. And if you're passing by on a Sunday morning, there is a worshipping community.

Four years ago, we did a needs-survey of Flemingdon Park, under the guidance and direction of the Presbytery of East Toronto. Based on survey results, the mission, with presbytery and national church support and guidance, opened two years ago this month. At the top of its third year it is growing and expanding and changing in very interesting ways. We still provide after-school programming for young people, but we have begun to develop leadership training programs for the teens.

I met these teens in the first month. Surrounding me in the church lounge were about a dozen young women, all of Afghan descent, and a few young men. I talked to them about being an immigrant, about the pressures they face to be both Afghani and Canadian, and their parents' struggle for dignity and survival. I concluded by saying it is my wish that every one of them become a lawyer because the world needs more lawyers from Flemingdon Park than from Rosedale, Toronto's wealthy ghetto. A young woman raised her hand and in no uncertain terms informed me that she intended to be a doctor, and furthermore, law, particularly Canadian law, should not be the primary goal for young people like her. The order should be medicine, diplomacy, international relations and then perhaps international law. I was speechless.

These young people are brilliant; certainly smarter than the generation of immigrants I grew up with. Curiously, when I mentioned I'd been to Afghanistan they all wanted to know what it was like. They've never been there. Their parents left when the Russians arrived, or later when the Taliban took over. These teens have grown up in refugee camps around the world; some speak as many as eight languages. From Canada they hope to develop the skills needed to be positive forces in the world. They are idealistic and naïve. They need us. Desperately. While they aim for bright futures, they are weighted down by present realities: depressed parents and sheer lack of Canadian cultural knowledge. Giving them leadership training helps them land on the road they deserve to be. Their past has been uncertain, their future need not be. And heaven knows: we need them. (To learn more see: [flemgatemission.com](http://flemgatemission.com).)

The whole process involving the mission has been a leap of faith. An act of believing; of love. I've found my



own faith deeply affected. At any given point over the past five years we didn't think it would happen; and yet it did. Call it Providence. The Spirit at work. I don't know. I just know it happened and often despite our efforts. As we crossed each stage by some miracle, our resolve grew deeper. I don't know what it was, but I suspect, like the lost men on the Emmaus Road, we have been kept company throughout.

I'll be quite ancient to host the denomination in my backyard four decades from now. Instead of making that date, I'd rather we focus on more important activities. Prayer is a good place to start. It's a great way of nurturing love. ■

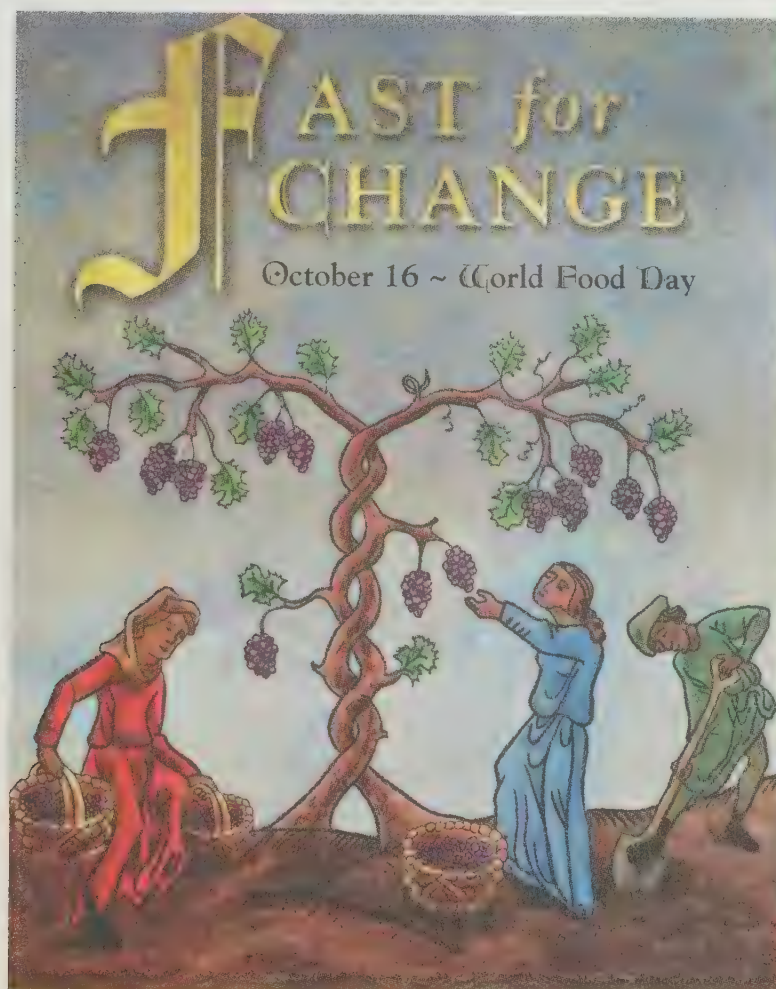
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# Commit, Support, Acknowledge

A PERSONAL JOURNEY TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION. BY J.P. IAN MORRISON

**T**hree events in the early 1990s precipitated a crisis of faith and a reconsideration of my relationship with aboriginal peoples—indeed, with all people.

The first event began when the mayor of Oka, Que., proposed the extension of a golf course onto land that Mohawks claimed as ancestral. The Mohawks responded with a barricade. The situation escalated when police attacked and an officer was killed. Only with the involvement of the Armed Forces did negotiations begin. Finally after almost six months, the stand-off ended.

The second event was the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Saskatchewan, held because of breaking awareness of abuses at residential schools run by Roman Catholic Church entities. Aboriginal people at that meeting were invited to tell their stories; I heard, firsthand and for the first time, stories of sexual and physical abuse.

Lastly, I visited two residential schools run by the Presbyterian Church: Birtle in Winnipeg, and Cecilia Jeffrey in northern Ontario. Having naïvely believed that abuses did not happen at Presbyterian schools, I listened to former students detail the abuses they had suffered.

All three experiences, particularly the last, were traumatic. In all my years of ministry, I had never realized how cultural dominance had been so devastating to aboriginal peoples. An education model sponsored by my church had led to one of the most horrendous events in Canadian history. This realization forever changed my life.

Born and raised in Glasgow, Scotland, I grew up with little exposure to aboriginal peoples (the term used was “Indian,” or “red Indian,” to avoid confusion with people from India). In cowboy movies, Indians were portrayed as bad guys, with white settlers being good guys to whom, by right of conquest, North America belonged. Any good Indians were supporting whites in their conquest. In history class, good Indians supported the British conquest of Canada. A major cultural image was the world map with

the “pink bits” representing countries that were parts of the British Empire.

Shaken by the three events, suddenly I could not remember those pink bits on the world map without thinking how a European understanding of colonial conquest had been imposed on indigenous people on every continent. No longer did I believe that my way was the only way. Learning about the pain and struggle of the aboriginal peoples of Canada broadened my life and forever changed my worldview.

In 1992, the Presbyterian Church in Canada set up a review committee. It recommended how the church should work with aboriginal peoples, and that the church adopt a confession to God and aboriginal peoples, acknowledging the church’s complicity in an assimilation policy and recognizing that the residential school system was systemically flawed, allowing the possibility of abuse. While a confession needed further work, General Assembly agreed with recommendations, “That the church commit itself to listen to the issues as they are named and described by aboriginal peoples ... support healing processes that arise from aboriginal peoples themselves ... [and] commit itself to seeking ways to work with aboriginal peoples in calling the Government of Canada to acknowledge that its policies were harmful ...”

Two years later, the church adopted the Confession with moderator Rev. George Vais presenting it to Grand Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in the fall of 1994 in Winnipeg. Accepting the apology, the Grand Chief said he could not yet forgive the church. (He attended and was abused in a school run by an order in the Roman Catholic Church.)

By this time a growing number of claims made against the Government of Canada and the churches required resolution. Participating in the challenge of trying to resolve the impact of these claims included working with colleagues from the United Church, the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as government representatives and native peoples.

The many meetings with aboriginal people gave us ➤



opportunities to become acquainted and to know each other by name. While anger was often expressed, there was also forgiveness as the church recognized its complicity in the assimilation policy. From our aboriginal brothers and sisters, I have learned there is another way of thinking about life and its challenges. I am eternally grateful to them for teaching me.

My most difficult and rewarding responsibility has been as PCC representative at the individual assessment program hearings. After the claimant's lawyer and the government representative speak, the church representative addresses the claimant. I speak of how I became involved with the PCC, how I learned only of the good things that happened at the schools, and how shocked I was to learn that my church was no different from the others. Then I speak of my healing journey and the church's struggle to adopt a confession to God and aboriginal peoples. I usually read aloud portions of the confession, and say that the church asked me to share this confession, to apologize for any hurt that the claimant has experienced through the neglect of the Presbyterian Church, and to ask for the claimant's forgiveness.

At one hearing after I spoke, the claimant stood up op-

posite me, walked around the table, passed his lawyer and the health worker until he reached me. He reached out and gave me a firm handshake and hug, saying that the church was forgiven. He returned to his seat and stated, with tears in his eyes, "This is the happiest day of my life," because the church admitted what it did was wrong.

Where do we go from here? The church must be involved wherever and whenever it can in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The church must continue to pressure the Canadian government to deal with outstanding issues about land and indigenous rights, and revive the recommendations in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The hardest job will be convincing the people of Canada to accept that the aboriginal peoples of Canada have a unique relationship with those of us who have come to these shores, regardless of how long ago or how recent. ■

*Rev. Ian Morrison is a former general secretary of the Presbyterian Church. This is excerpted from his submission to the Edinburgh 2010 mission conference. It was part of a study paper on mission and power submitted by Canadians.*

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# Transformative





# Resources

## HOW TO PLAN A CONFERENCE

BY MARK A. TREMBLAY



ow do you transform the negative energy expressed as an “anxiety of survival” into a confident and attractive vision of the Bible we can all share and explore with each other? This question was asked last year by the Presbytery

of Kingston. We felt God was calling us forward and as a presbytery we wondered how to provide leadership and resources to equip our ministers and elders for this transformation.

Having articulated the problem, we began our journey. We networked with many people at national offices to find a way forward. Adapting a conference similar to Stewards by Design seemed to make sense given the proven track record of that model.

However, there were two limitations of which we were aware: Preparation for the conference and follow up afterwards.

The Presbytery of Kingston has 17 churches within its bounds and we felt it was important to get every church on board. Presbytery approved a conference involving every congregation. We initially began to budget for teams of four from each congregation. Knowing that we would have 68 participants was key for setting the budget and finding a conference centre large enough to accommodate our numbers. We also benefitted from a sample budget for Stewards by Design in order to help us understand the kinds of expenses we might incur.

MBBIRDY/ISTOCKPHOTO





We were wonderfully surprised by the response from the business community: they sponsored about half of our meals and breaks

Presbytery approved a budget of \$34,000 and an application to five different funds—Vine Conference Fund and Leadership Links, the Experimental Fund, Canada Ministries and the Ewart Endowment for Theological Education. Each congregation was asked to pay \$1,000 in monthly increments of \$200 to assist in cash flow. Any congregation choosing not to participate in the conference was asked to pay an additional \$500. Paying more not to participate proved to be great incentive.

We contacted Dr. Kennon L. Callahan, author of numerous books on congregational development, and a frequent speaker at Stewards by Design conferences. To address the first limitation and to insure that participants were familiar with Callahan's books, we had three pre-conference workshops led by Rev. Dr. Rick Horst. The plan was to encourage congregations to create a team who would see this process through. The willingness of our elders and members to get involved speaks to a high level of commitment we can celebrate and honour in each of our congregations. Within a month of beginning our journey we had over 60 people at our first pre-conference event and more than 65 at the remaining two in January and March.

We approached businesses within the presbytery to underwrite the costs of our meals and breaks during the conference. It was imperative that we did not apply to different funds to cover the same costs and that our funders understood exactly what the money was paying for. We were wonderfully surprised by the response from the business community: Empire Life, CanWealth Financial, Qualified Financial Services, Templemann Menninga LLP, Rideau Acres Campground and Estate and Corporate Group Ltd.

sponsored about half of our meals and breaks. One of our funders put it best when he commented that he was, "proud to be a partner in possibility with us."

On May 13, day one of the conference, we had 65 participants. A talented and remarkable group of people assembled from Trenton to Gananoque and as far north as Madoc, taking time from work and other commitments, to share and dream about their church. From the moment of the first worship with Rev. Dr. Herb Gale the participants felt they were part of something special. The comments on the evaluations included: 'Unreal. Very powerful. Insightful. Beyond useful. Excellent and amazing.' More than simply a mountain-top experience, the conference addressed our anxiety and many felt hopeful.

As a presbytery, we are in the middle of discerning what to do next. There is much congregations can and will do on their own and there are some things we can do as a presbytery. Part of our movement forward is to make time at our presbytery meeting for our congregations to share their successes and excellent mistakes. We are talking about creating a presbytery website which will include a section to post and share ideas and continue the conversation. With the money left over from the conference, the presbytery hopes to establish a ministry growth fund which can be used for new endeavours within our bounds.

A deep sense of community formed as congregations shared and realized they were not alone and that presbytery can offer transformative resources. Planning something like this conference was much easier as many people understood its importance and participated with such grace and enthusiasm. ■

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*Rev. Mark Tremblay is minister at Church of the Covenant, Lansdowne, and St. Paul's, Caintown, Ont. He also serves as clerk of the Presbytery of Kingston.*



# Partners in Possibility

WORKING WITH OTHERS. **BY HERB GALE**



Rev. Jose Augusto Sapon and his wife, Ruth, with  
Rev. Herb Gale and his wife, Shirley.

**IT WAS 3:30** Sunday afternoon and I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was my wife, Shirley. "Do you feel well enough to go to church this evening?" she asked. I had been in bed the last two days recovering from some sort of intestinal bug I had picked up during our travels in Guatemala. I was supposed to have brought greetings from the Presbyterian Church in Canada to the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church at their Saturday evening service, but that had been out of the question. An additional 24 hours with antibiotics in my system made me feel a little more human.

I got up, got dressed and soon there was a knock on the door. It was Ken Kim and Barb Summers. Ken, director of Presbyterian World Service and Development, was our tour guide and translator for the trip. Barb, communications coordinator, was the chief photographer and a great traveling companion. More recently, they, along with Shirley, had been my nursemaids. Soon we arrived at the Philadelphia church in La Esperanza (*esperanza* is Spanish for "hope").

As we entered the sanctuary, I was struck by its simple beauty. It is an oasis of hope in communities that have too intimately known the pain of war and poverty. The congregation sees their facilities as something to be shared with the whole community and I learned that the new sanctuary was a dream of the congregation that came about with some help from the PCC's mission part-

nership program.

Four congregations in the Presbytery of Hamilton (Alberton; St. Paul's, Carluke; Knox, Binbrook; and Chedoke, Hamilton) raised \$25,000—half the cost for the building project. Two work

MISSION WORK IS  
NOT ABOUT DOING  
WORK FOR OTHERS  
BUT ABOUT  
WORKING WITH  
OTHERS

teams (one in August 2008 and another in February 2010) journeyed to Guatemala to work alongside members of the Philadelphia congregation and to learn more about the mission work of the PCC. Jay Brenzil, one of the participants in the first team, described the experience saying, "I always thought that 'doing mission' meant doing work projects. I have learned that mission is not about doing work for others, but about working with others: forming relationships and bettering ourselves."

When we returned to the hotel, I flopped back into bed after swallowing the last two pills in my antibiotic regimen. It was 8:30 p.m. I had managed three hours straight in the vertical position! As I drifted off to sleep, I thanked God for antibiotics, for the

support of family and friends (thank you, Shirley, Ken and Barb) and for the fact that we really can do more together than we can ever accomplish on our own. The next day I woke up actually feeling hungry, eager to start a new day, and with a new awareness that we truly are partners in possibility—partners with one another through God's love in Jesus Christ and partners with God in whom all things are possible! ■

Blessings

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving. Follow his journey as moderator by reading his blog at [presbyterian.ca/moderator](http://presbyterian.ca/moderator).

## learn more

The title for this article is borrowed from the Vine's mission study for children and youth. Find out more at [presbyterian.ca/thevine](http://presbyterian.ca/thevine).

Lindsey Hepburn-Aley co-ordinates mission trips, which help congregations connect with mission partners and build on the ongoing work supported by Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D.

Contact her at [lhepburn@presbyterian.ca](mailto:lhepburn@presbyterian.ca)



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## Rockway, Ont.

One Sunday in August, the congregations of First, North Pelham, and Rockway, Ont., celebrated a service on the banks of Fifteen Mile Creek, the site of the old Presbyterian church in Rockway. One of the elders even wrote a poem about it, which you can read on our website.

## Summerside, P.E.I.

Sixteen children, ages four to 12, and six youth volunteers learned about world hunger and how they could help feed the world and the local community at the Summerside VBS last August. The participants collected food for the Salvation Army food bank and were very excited when they made the presentation.



## St. Paul's, Black River Bridge, N.B.

In July, St. Paul's celebrated its 80th anniversary. Cutting the cake are Rev. Derek Krunys, Edith (Cameron) Bremner, a member of the choir in 1930, Kenneth Glendenning, clerk of session, and Don Glendenning who was baptized the day the church was officially opened. Not seen is the special speaker for the worship, Rev. Blaikie, son of a former minister.



**Scarborough, Ont.**

Jim McPherson is a longtime member at Clairlea Park. He has led a local soccer program for 42 years and has always seen it as a church outreach program. Well, it seems, sometimes the secular world does notice. Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, General Assembly Office, took the photo; his children played in McPherson's league when they were younger.

**Ratho, Ont.**

Joyce Ferguson, June Milson and Isabel Archer are amongst the ladies at Ratho who weave empty milk bags into sleeping mats. These help keep waste out of the local landfill, and parasites away from children in the developing world who would otherwise sleep on the ground. It takes about 300 milk bags to create one child's mat, and 400 for an adult's. Each mat is wrapped around a sheet and wool blanket, making it a complete bed. That's some mission.

**PYPS Reunion**

At this reunion of Presbyterian Young People's Society, Toronto-Kingston Synod, 1960-1980, which met in August at St. Andrew's, Parry Sound, Ont., are two former moderators, several clergy, former missionaries, the principal of one of our colleges, the director of Crieff, national offices staff and many elders and lay people. Recognize anyone?


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No vacancies at this time.

## Obituaries

**WILD, KENNETH (KEN) CHARLES**, died on Feb. 21, 2010 in hospital in Bridgewater, N.S. He was born in Brampton, Ont. After graduating from York University, Toronto, Ken worked in the insurance industry. In 1986, he entered the Presbyterian College, Montreal, graduating in 1989.

After ordination he served at Kenyon Church, Dunvegan, Ont.; at St. Andrew's, Southampton, Ont.; at



St. Andrew's, Lunenburg, N.S.; and St. Andrew's, Rose Bay, N.S., from November 2004 until his death.

Ken served as clerk of Grey-Bruce-Maitland presbytery, clerk of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario and chaplain of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #23, Lunenburg, N.S.

Ken is survived by his brother, Ronald (Cathy), Thornton, Ont.; nieces, Jennifer (Joe) Mercer and their daughters, Katelyn and Kimberly Wild; nephew, Michael (Sarah) Wild; mother-in-law, Mary (Sandles) Mossop, Penetanguishene, Ont.; and brother-in-law, John (Nora) Mossop, Indianapolis. He was predeceased by his wife, Darlene on Feb. 2, 2009. ■

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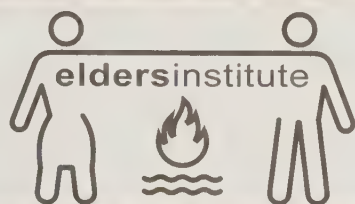
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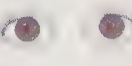

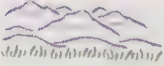


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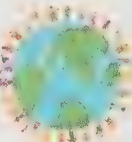
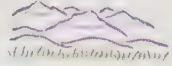










# Called to Wonder




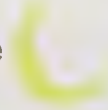


## PSALM 121





With my , I look  to the . Does my  come from the ?






No, my  comes from .  made the .

and the  and the  will  you . You will

not  because  does not .  is  you .

 will  you from the  and the .  will  you

from .  will  you when you  and when you

  will  you  and .

### Key to Rebus Puzzle





## The power of giving thanks, of showing gratitude; it is amazing and yet it strikes me that we are so miserly at doing it in our culture

*For the Journey, continued from page 54*

"Yeah," I said, just as Halden swerved quickly into the parking lot. "And I recognize every one of them."

Halden herded us towards the door as we harangued him about what was going on. He stuffed us in through the door into the darkened hall and suddenly the lights came on to the tune of, "Surprise! Happy 20th anniversary."

I was just about to stand forth and impatiently correct the huge crowd gathered before us: It was not our 20th anniversary; it was our 39th anniversary. If you are going to go to the trouble to gather such a huge crowd to celebrate it, at least get the number right. Then I remembered. It was our 20th anniversary, sort of. It had been 20 years ago that summer that Linda and our young boys Halden and Davin had moved north from the Presbytery of Westminster under appointment of the Life and Mission Agency to begin our dream of an interdenominational rural house church mission in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of B.C. The huge crowd that gathered were the people who had been touched by those 20 years of mission work.

It was an amazing party, a real thanksgiving feast. There was great music, great food, wonderful speeches and a knock your socks off DVD presentation that our partner in mission, Shannon Bell-Wyominga had put together. It was all by way of saying thank you to Linda and I for the past 20 years of vision, work and mission. I was moved to tears a number of times. Linda and I were both deeply touched by the thanks we were given. It was a night of tender feelings and wonderful memories. But most of all, it was a night of inspiration and empowerment. Linda and I came away with a new sense of being loved and appreciated that inspired us and empowered us to

begin the next years, however many there would be, with a new energy, excitement and commitment.

"If only the people knew what they have done to us," I said to Linda as we drove home late that night and we were discussing what we were feeling after the evening of gratitude.

"I guess they will find out," said Linda. "Maybe we should have warned everyone to lace up their running shoes. We're off to the mission races with renewed power and energy."

The power of giving thanks, of showing gratitude; it is amazing and yet it strikes me that we are so miserly at doing it in our culture, many times even in our churches. I suppose one could wag the finger and lecture on how we in society and in the church need to change and become generous in expressing gratitude to one another. But that is not the main lesson I took away from our thanksgiving party. What I took away was, "If this is how being freely and fully thanked has dramatically affected me tonight, how does it affect God?"

As I reflect on this question it strikes me that the Bible really doesn't have much to say about how thanking God affects God. Jesus is said to be the full reflection or image of God in the flesh and as such, in him we see God. There are several times when Jesus is shown gratitude in the gospels. It does seem to deeply touch him that one of the 10 lepers actually returned to thank him for the healing. And then there is the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, which seems to me to be a pretty powerful expression of gratitude, especially offered the way it was, before Jesus did anything. Jesus actually seems to forgive her sins in response to her thanksgiving. Was Jesus so affected by the deep expression of gratitude given by the woman that it inspired him to act, perhaps even empowered him to

act and forgive?

Three of the most interesting stories in scripture that may help the most in getting at the answer to this question—How does the free and full thanking of God affect God?—has to do with Jesus giving thanks to the Father. At the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, which appears in all four gospels, the only prayer that Jesus offers is a prayer of thanksgiving to his Father (Mark 6:41). The only prayer that Jesus offers a couple of chapters later at the miracle of the feeding of the 4,000 is a prayer of thanksgiving to his Father (Mark 8:6). And at the tomb and the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the only prayer that Jesus offers is a prayer of thanksgiving to his Father (John 11:41). I have no idea how God felt at those times of being freely and fully thanked by the Son, but I am suitably impressed with how it affected God. The miracles are evidence of that. I don't know if it is appropriate to say God was empowered by the giving of thanks to the point of performing the miracles or if it is appropriate to say that the giving of thanks inspired God. I am convinced, however, that there is a divine power inherent in giving thanks to God, so much so that this recent revelation to me has radically changed my prayer life. The content of my prayers now seem to be much less of the type of worrying in front of God and much more prayers of freely and fully thanking God, even before God does anything, maybe even if God does nothing at all. ■

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*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*





# The Power of Thanksgiving

OFF TO THE MISSION RACES WITH POWER AND ENERGY. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

**“SO** where are you taking us?” Linda asked coyly. Halden and his fiancée, Laurie insisted that we keep the night of Sept. 12 free.

“We are taking you out,” they said. “Don’t ask where to or what for.”

A few days after getting the instructions from Halden and Laurie, an inadvertent comment from Chelsea and her new husband, Mike that they might be up from the coast that same weekend got Linda and me to thinking. Our 39th wedding anniversary kind of got lost in the planning and pulling off of Chelsea and Mike’s recent wedding. They had been married on the same day as our anniversary, just a few weeks before.

“Must be the kids are going to take us out to 100 Mile House for a little surprise anniversary dinner,” Linda said.

“I don’t care, as long as I am not paying,” I said.

And so at the appointed hour on the prescribed night, Halden and Laurie cleaned out the van, loaded us in and off we went to our wedding anniversary dinner. I was even wearing a clean T-shirt. It’s about a 45-minute drive to the hamlet of 100 Mile House from our place, so I settled in for a nice evening drive with someone else doing the driving for a change. Fifteen minutes into it, we drove through the highway settlement of Lac La Hache.

“I wonder what’s going on at the old log community hall,” Linda said, as we drove through Lac La Hache. “Sure are an awful lot of cars in the parking lot.” continued on page 53





The Biskin



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On the Cover: Illustration by Barry Falls/  
Heart Agency



# Risk It All

FOR JESUS, IT WAS THE ONLY WAY. BY WES DENYER

**F**or the last three years, I've been on Assembly Council. I've had the opportunity to talk with people from across the country, and time and again I hear stories of small, elderly congregations—less than 50 people out on a Sunday. And I can't help thinking, what's going to happen to those hundreds of little churches over the next 20 years? There isn't a new generation, or at least, not nearly enough of them, to step in and take the place of those faithful, elderly members.

I'm thinking, they're not going to make it ...

Now, nobody wants to see a congregation close down ... we just hate to do that. People get upset. They've been worshipping there all their lives. Just let it go on for a little longer ... Don't be mean to them ...

And I understand that, but, I need to tell you, sometimes I wonder what an alien species would think if they came and observed the tribe we call, Presbyterians. If they tried to figure out the purpose of our group, I'm worried they might come to the conclusion that we're "a society for the preservation of old buildings."

I love the Presbyterian Church in Canada—its history and its traditions—but that's not why Jesus went to the cross. I seem to remember Jesus looking at the magnificent Temple at the centre of Jerusalem and the Jewish religion, and he said to his disciples, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another ..."

And then, in the Gospel of Mark, "Jesus said, 'You can't put new wine into old wineskins.'"

And that's the way it turned out for the followers of Jesus. They tried to stay

within traditional Judaism—the synagogue, Temple worship—but the old structures wouldn't ... couldn't accommodate ... adapt, to the new ways of the disciples of Jesus. They were rejected or tossed out; the old wineskins couldn't hold the new wine.

---

**I have way more questions  
than I have answers,  
but I have this sense that  
the way we're doing things  
now isn't going to work  
that much longer**

---

Now, am I going to tell you I've got the answers? No ...

I have way more questions than I have answers, but I have this sense that the way we're doing things now isn't going to work that much longer.

Is it possible? The Holy Spirit is crying out for us to change course, and

will we ... can we change course before we run aground?

And while there's still time, will we—our presbyteries and the Presbyterian Church—will we risk our very existence, the very life of this church of ours, this church I've loved and served all my life—will we put its very life in danger in order to be faithful to God?

And you see, here's what I think: I don't think we have a choice, because we've pledged our very souls to the one who said to us, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Now, I don't know if that's a threat or a promise—maybe both, but for Jesus, it was the way he lived ... it was the bottom line, "Risk it all to follow me ... all of it ..."—for him it was the only way. ■

---

*Rev. Wes Denyer is minister at St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont. This was originally posted at the Emmaus Project page at [presbyterian.ca/emmaus](http://presbyterian.ca/emmaus).*



Rev. Wes Denyer speaks with Rev. John Crowdis at the Emmaus Conference in May



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## Effective Teaching

Learning about other faiths in no way diminishes or trivializes our own. In fact it can strengthen it. I am in the last decade of my century, a lifelong Presbyterian, who values a first rate education beginning in the home, continuing in church, in school, in university and life experiences. I believe that as long as we have life in this world we are growing and learning. To quote the late professor William Barclay of Glasgow University: "To listen to the other side of the question can be a salutary experience." I firmly believe that no professor of theology can be an effective teacher without studying all the faiths/religions of the world.

JEAN G. CAMPBELL, WINNIPEG

## Tip of the Iceberg

*Re Because I See Hope, September*

Thank you, Laura Ashfield and thanks to the *Record* for publishing this thoughtful article. When we were the same age as Laura is now, and aware of the immense suffering of Jews in much of Europe under Nazi Germany, we admired the dedication and energy in Israeli kibbutzim, which attracted not only Jews but also non-Jews of our age. We applauded the way Jewish settlers made the desert bloom—or so it seemed. However, we knew nothing then of the suffering of Palestinians. The events of the kind Laura describes are evidently just the tip of the iceberg of what is happening and has happened for a long time.

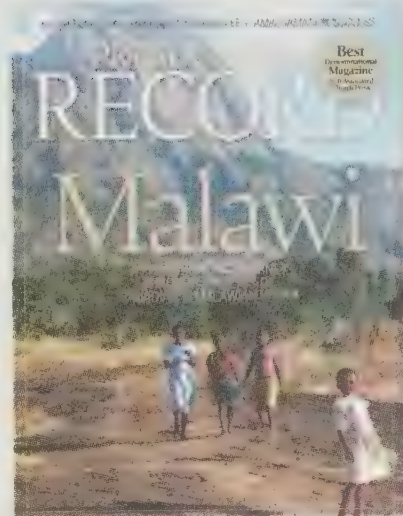
ELKE AND JOHN MOLGAARD, ST. JOHN'S

## Challenging Speaker

*Re Cooking Up Controversy, September*

After seeing this I went out and got *The Ethical Canary* and *The Ethical Imagination*, both by Margaret Somerville, from our local library. Having finished, I'm exhausted. It is an understatement to say that her work is challenging; she drives right through

# Letters



write to us

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core taboos of just about every aspect  
of our civilization.

JOHN M., ONLINE

## A Weather-Eye on Seniors

There was a time when the congregation of a church would have a small group that kept a weather-eye on their older parishioners, especially the most elderly not in the best of health and others with physical limitations.

Apparently this very kind and valuable service has gradually been allowed to fade away for various reasons which appear on the surface to be fully justified. This is most unfortunate. Perhaps this type of friendly touch ➤

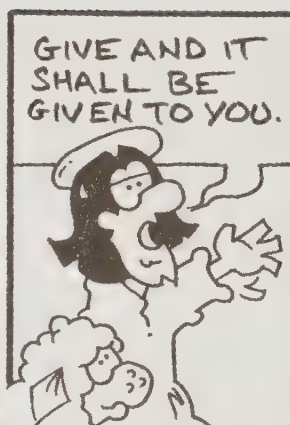
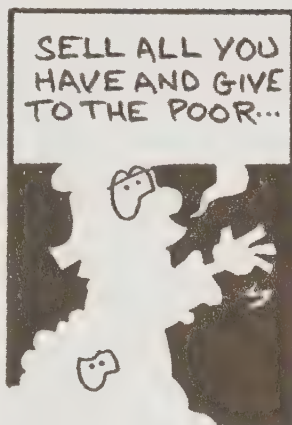
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## Pontius' Puddle


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is the only caring word such a person may receive for a lengthy period.

ANONYMOUS, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT.

### Disapproval

*Re Ordaining Homosexual Clergy, News, September*

I was amazed to discover that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has approved the ordination of homosexual clergy, still to be approved by 173 presbyteries.

I hope and pray this idea is never approved (in the U.S. or Canada) for God's holy word speaks entirely against

such action. Romans 1:28 makes this quite clear. There are several verses of scripture before and after this verse and down into the next chapter that reveal God's disapproval.

CECIL E. BURRIDGE, BARRIE, ONT.

### A Significant Message

Of all the fine writings in the February issue, what really got through to me was the cartoon, Pontius Puddle and the real message that it contained. The simplicity and yet the important message which this seven-word line implied, with the preamble of

masks, sanitizers, etc., was indeed as significant a message or perhaps a wake-up call as I've read recently.

No disrespect to the contributing editors intended.

F. H. FORSYTH, BARRIE, ONT.

*Editor's Note:* None taken.

### Tithing is Easy

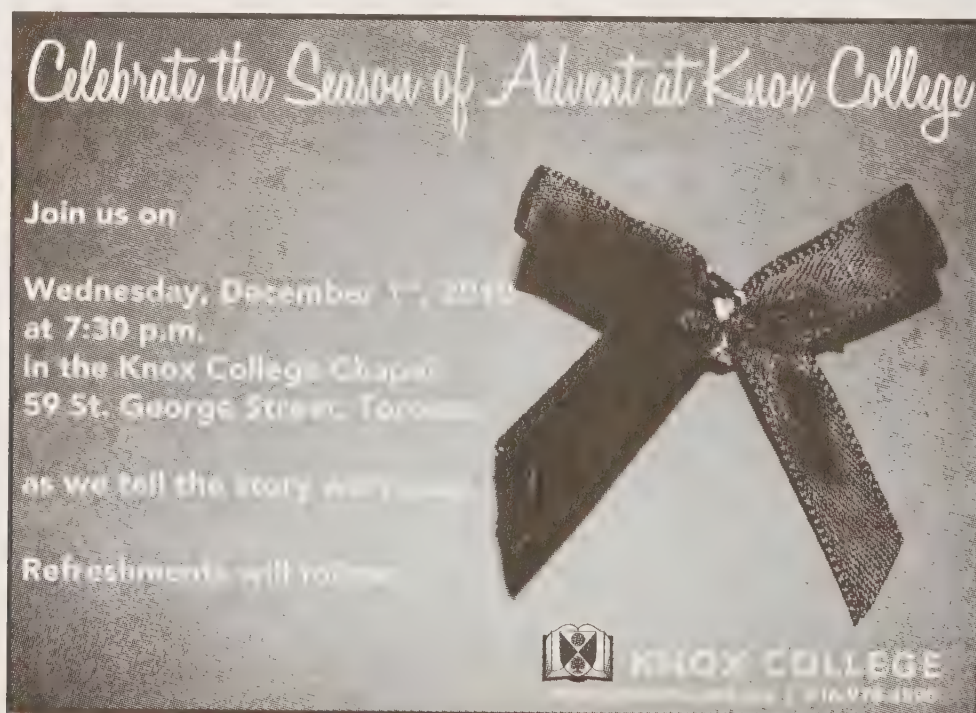
*Re Defined by Generosity, May*

I notice that while tithing is practiced by some Christians, it is not promoted in the article. I know it is argued that tithing is legalistic and not 19 per cent, but all we possess belongs to the Lord. However, in a society dominated by consumerism and decadence it is easy to end up giving little to charity. I tithe, not because I am generous but because I am selfish and greedy. Also, it simplifies dealing with all the worthy appeals one receives for if there is no money in the monthly tithing account the appeal can be ignored. Tithing makes it easy to calculate what the weekly giving to the church should be.

In the early church, when some soldiers were being baptized they held above the water their right arm so the hand that held the weapon of war was not baptized. Today, many Christian wallets have not been baptized. Tithing helps us overcome pocket-book protection. There is plenty of money around but the church receives little of it.


REV. KENNETH G. MCMILLAN,

THORNHILL, ONT.



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## Warm Greetings Welcomed

Re: *Relative Cold, January*

Kudos to Rev. David Webber for alluding to a touchy subject, the refreshing and healing power of physical contact. Most of us, as laid back Canadians, are missing out on what could be a physical extension of our faith. Hugging, holy kissing and warm greetings are appropriate ways to greet fellow Christians as repeated several times in the Bible.

I have attended a couple of retreats, leaving behind the cares of the world, and spontaneous shows of affection occurred. They were not sexual, but rediscoveries of warm feelings without guilt. Back in the real world there is still a resistance to "physical displays of affection" as aptly put by Webber.

J. GORDON NEAL, WHITBY, ONT.

## Mystery of Creation

Re: *Science and Religion, Letters, June*

The following is of interest. From *God and the Astronomer* by Robert Jastrow: "At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story evolves like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

From Einstein: "Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe—a spirit vastly superior to that of man and one in the face of which we, with our modest power, must feel humble."

G. MACKINTOSH, PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

## Devil Hands

Re *Wanted: Excited Christians, March 2007*

My wife and I recently attended

a nearby Presbyterian church for a concert as a fundraiser for native peoples. As we were a little early for the concert we browsed through a copy of the March 2007 *Presbyterian Record* which was left at the rear of the sanctuary for interested readers. (I just now realize how old the publication was.)

While it proved to be a fine and informative magazine, I was shocked to see the picture on page 26 of a young girl attending your Canada Youth 2006 conference showing the devil's hand sign with both her hands. (It's shown again on page 3.) If you are unaware of the significance of a hand sign with the first and last fingers raised, then do a Google search and make your own judgment.

While it may be that this girl has no idea of the social and satanic significance of what she was doing, I would assume that your editorial staff would have noticed this error and chosen another picture to run in its place. As I would similarly assume that you would reject pictures of a child wearing a T-shirt with a large swastika emblazoned on it or a picture showing a person holding up a closed hand with only the index finger pointing straight up—as most people recognize this obscene gesture as being inappropriate for your publication.

If this matter has already been brought to your attention, then thank you for your time; otherwise I hope that I have assisted you in your continuing work to bring forth the good word to His people.

MIKE MERRITT, HAVELOCK, ONT. ■

### online extra

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** AS ALWAYS, LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA).



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# Twitterings

THE REVOLUTION IS BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS. BY ANDREW FAIZ

*"Social media* can't provide what social change has always required," argues Malcolm Gladwell in the Oct. 4 issue of the *New Yorker* in a fascinating article that challenges a lot of assumptions about the power of the internet. He pokes holes into the overheated stories that protest in Tehran or Moldova were aided by Twitter or Facebook.

So inflated are the claims that a former U.S. national security adviser, Mark Pfeifle, called for Twitter to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. "Without Twitter the people of Iran would not have felt empowered and confident to stand up for freedom and democracy," Pfeifle wrote.

Yeah, but, counters Gladwell, the ones twittering about Iran were not in Iran. He quotes an Iranian journalist: "Western journalists who couldn't reach—or didn't bother reaching?—people on the ground in Iran simply scrolled through the English-language tweets posted with tag #iranelection. Through it all, no one seemed to wonder why people trying to coordinate protests in Iran would be writing in any language other than Farsi."

And as to Moldova's Twitter Revolution? It seems, "Twitter had scant internal significance in Moldova, a country where very few Twitter accounts exist."

All new technologies overstate their importance, Gladwell reminds us. True enough: We still don't live in a paperless society, the mop and the vacuum cleaner are still much needed tools, and we still have to prepare meals instead of having them appear from a machine in the wall. Gladwell writes, "Fifty years after one of the most extraordinary episodes of social upheaval in American history [the Civil Rights movement], we seem to



"WHAT THOSE MEN DID  
WAS DANGEROUS—  
"HIGH-RISK ACTIVISM"—  
BUT THEY DID IT  
BECAUSE THEY WERE  
COMMITTED AND  
HAD STRONG TIES  
TO EACH OTHER

have forgotten what activism is."

The deep social change begun at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, was based on relationships and orga—nization. The four young men who first sat down in that Woolworth's that one Monday in 1960 were friends. "Ezell Blair worked up the courage the next day to ask for a cup of coffee because he was flanked by his roommate and two good friends from high school."

What those men did was dangerous—"high-risk activism"—but they did it because they were highly committed and had strong ties to each other.

By comparison, "social media are built around weak ties. Twitter is a way of following (or being followed by) people you may never have met. Facebook is a tool for efficiently managing your acquaintances, for keeping up with the people you would not oth-

erwise be able to stay in touch with. That's why you can have a thousand 'friends' on Facebook, as you never could in real life."

This is not necessarily a bad thing. A single posting on my Facebook page about the Flemington Gateway Mission was cut and pasted and spread to several hundred people from my old high school. Similarly a posting about my mother's death spread quickly to friends and family. It was an efficient, if somewhat impersonal, way to sharing the news.

"The Facebook page of the Save Darfur Coalition," Gladwell writes, "has 1,282,339 members, who have donated an average of nine cents apiece. The next biggest Darfur charity on Facebook has 22,073 members, who have donated an average of 35 cents. Help Save Darfur has 2,797 members, who have given, on average, 15 cents. ... Facebook activism succeeds not by motivating people to make a real sacrifice but by motivating them to do the things that people do when they are not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice. We are a long way from the lunch counters of Greensboro."

What activism requires, Gladwell insists, is what it has always required: Leadership, hierarchy, commitment, sacrifice and, most importantly, supportive relationships. It is one thing to hit "Like" on a Facebook page, quite another to make a personal commitment of money, time, skills. You have to care about something deeply to bother doing something about it. In the end, it's the virility of our relationships and not the virality of our amusements that matters. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.  
managing editor.



## Staff Shake-Up at Wynford

DEPARTMENTS MERGING AND FIVE POSITIONS LOST. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

IN AN EFFORT to streamline finances, encourage collaboration between staff, and better respond to the changes and challenges facing congregations, the management team at church offices, backed by the Life and Mission Agency Committee, announced major changes to the national church.

A total of five positions have been cut, and the two main departments responsible for congregational support and church development—the Vine and Canada Ministries—will merge beginning Jan. 1, 2011.

"This is a difficult day," said Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, during a Sept. 20 all-staff meeting. "People will be leaving, and we're very sorry about that."

The five positions affected are as follows:

- custodial services (one position)
- support staff (already retired; position not being renewed)
- Youth in Mission (half-time; vacant; not being renewed)
- Ministry and Church Vocations (one half-time position)
- the Vine (one position)
- Canada Ministries (associate secretary retiring; not being renewed)

Youth in Mission duties will fall to Lindsey Hepburn, Mission Interpretation Coordinator. The newly merged Vine and Canada Ministries will operate under one associate secretary, who will

be chosen by Aug. 31, 2011.

"Supporting congregations in transition and all of the ministry areas within the mandate of the Vine will continue to be the priority of the merged departments of the Vine and Canada Ministries," said Vine team leader, Tori Smit. "Together, through this centrally located office we will continue to place the greatest priority on congregations and their access to readily available support through people, programs and resources."

Financial management within the Life and Mission Agency will also undergo a makeover. Beginning Jan. 1, a three-person team will handle the finances of the LMA in the new department of Administration and Program Support. Currently, each department within the LMA looks after its own finances. Centralizing the work will enable staff who have specific training in this area to look after an important aspect of church business, and will free up other LMA staff for different duties.

"The management team expresses its appreciation of all staff who have lived with the knowledge that a reorganization is underway at the national office," states a press release. "These changes have not been without pain and stress and we regret that several good colleagues will be leaving the national office. The ongoing dedication and commitment of the national office staff to serving our church is

“This is a transitional time. It's not easy for anyone, it requires flexibility, and pitching in by everybody”

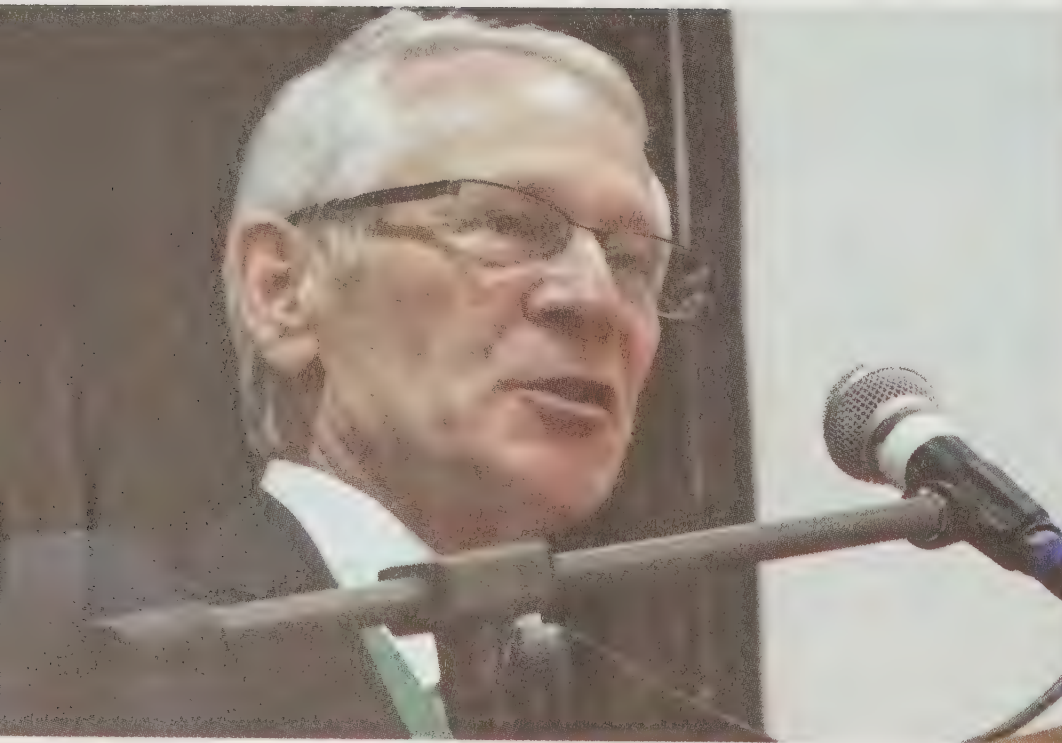
acknowledged with gratitude."

The changes were sparked by decisions made by the Assembly Council in Nov. 2009, which required the national church to produce a balanced budget. Due in large part to decreased givings to Presbyterian Sharing for the past several years, budget shortfalls were common and monies were being taken from other church funds to make up the difference. Noticing that such a pattern could not continue, several measures were taken by the Assembly Council as a first step to rid the church of red ink.

Changes announced in Nov. 2009 included a mandatory unpaid, one-week holiday for church offices staff for 2010 and 2011, a suspension of the cost of living allowance increase for the same two years, decreases in the operating budgets of the General Assembly Office, the LMA and Support Services, and a reduction in grants to colleges.

These changes included two facets of budget review. One was ➤





Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency.

an exercise in finding temporary savings of \$900,000 to ensure that the projected operating fund has no deficit by the end of 2011. These temporary savings amount to spending reductions that were implemented in 2009 through 2011. The other was an exercise in finding permanent savings of \$815,000 in the 2011 budget that will provide for a projected balanced budget in the future.

The more recent decisions made at Wynford were the next step in securing long-term financial stability for the church, while simultaneously overhauling the way work is carried

out and by whom. Financial savings were already included in the numbers mentioned above.

According to a press release posted on the church's website in October ([presbyterian.ca/pconnect/daily/5488](http://presbyterian.ca/pconnect/daily/5488)), the recent changes reflect a return to a vision first developed in 1992:

"The original vision (1992) for the Education for Discipleship Team provides an excellent model for the desired flexibility and adaptability that are required within the LMA as we seek to be responsive to the needs of congregations and the entire church

**“This is painful, stressful, regretful. People may not feel valued, but the work you do for the church is important and it is appreciated and you are valued”**

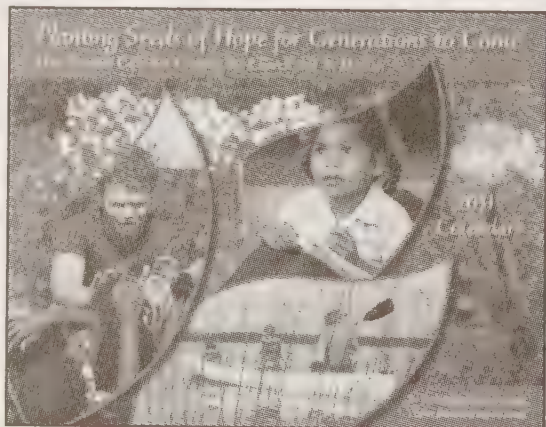
in these changing times. The original vision was for a team which could be re-shaped, reconfigured, and adjusted depending on the needs of the church in the areas of congregational nurture and development.”

That vision led to the creation of the Vine, a two-year pilot project, which will now morph into a new department with Canada Ministries.

“This is a transitional time. It’s not easy for anyone,” said LMA general secretary, Rick Fee during the all-staff meeting. “It requires flexibility, and pitching in by everybody.

“This is painful, stressful, regretful. People may not feel valued, but the work you do for the church is important and it is appreciated and you are valued.” ■

*Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.*



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# Q&A: Reformed and Reforming

AN INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL SECRETARY, RICK FEE. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

**RECENT DECISIONS** made at church offices, including five staff positions cut and the merger of Canada Ministries and the Vine, left many feeling angry, frustrated, and concerned about the church's future. According to Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency—the department most affected by the restructuring—the decisions are a response to calls for change from across the church and from within the Life and Mission Agency Committee. Fee sat down with the *Record's* senior writer, Amy MacLachlan to discuss the new vision, and to hopefully allay fears that congregations and presbyteries will suffer as a result.

## On the process of decision-making:

**RICK FEE:** “The LMA, as part of its ongoing mandate, continually assesses how money is spent. We talk about it whenever we meet. When the Vine was created, it was done so with the desire to be flexible and to adapt to the changing needs of the denomination. But when we looked at the way things were going, over the years and down the road, it would become contrary to our original vision of 1992. So, the LMA Committee challenged everyone to listen to congregations and what the church was saying. Ultimately, it was borne out of the Emmaus conference, where we heard over and over, ‘Help us, help us, help us. Congregations are in pain, and in change. What you provide nationally should help us with what we address everyday. Give us the tools we need.’

So, when the finances were brought to the forefront, it coalesced our thinking. We wondered, what can we do practically, and how best can we implement all the suggestions in order to provide the best service to congregations?

I know there's great concern about the two departments merging [Canada Ministries and the Vine]. People are wondering, what's being dropped? The core issues of our church will remain, but the LMA will be doing things differently, so people will change and the configuration of the office will change. We're trying to use the gifts and talents that are here in the best way possible. But the work will continue. For example, Youth in Mission. It's not closing down. It's as strong as always, but it's being done by a new person, Lindsey Hepburn in Education for Mission. And she's given up other work that will now fall to someone else.

That is the reason why the financial work will be centralized. We're taking the tasks that some people have been doing who really have no expertise in that area, and giving it to people who have training to handle it. That in turn frees up staff for other tasks. So, the work continues. Working for congregations will continue. Everything is there. People will answer the phones, and their emails; it just might be someone different than you're used to.

The LMA has the mandate to organize and do its own work. This has all gone through the LMA Committee at


every stage. They were part of the initial planning, thinking, and previous drafts. And it was confirmed by them.”

## On further consultation:

**RF:** “We've already been doing this. We want to draw upon all the gifts and talents we have here [at church offices], and make sure they're given assignments that they're interested in, are capable of doing, and are gifted in. We can then shift responsibilities accordingly. We recognize that the church wants the work done, and it's being done through this means.

For example, we meet in groups, and we met with the Stewardship team and Planned Giving. We asked them to collaborate more when possible, as some of their work fits together. We recognize there's a fine line between some groups, so working together would be on an ad-hoc basis, so per project. But this is ensuring that staff is working together and to the maximum benefit of everyone.

It encourages a flow of talent and gifts, and being project-oriented. Congregations and presbyteries have expressed a need; our job is to respond. We want to re-emphasize the vital importance of congregations; we want to recapture ➤

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the pivotal role of presbyteries; and we want to reorder the program arm of the church so that we effectively serve both congregations and presbyteries."

#### On other options:

**RF:** "Everything was thought about. Over the last few years, every possible scenario was considered. We thought about whether there should be various collaborations. PWS&D was kept separate, since they need a separate audit, and have a separate income. With CIDA, it's just too complicated. They're actually being audited this November by CIDA."

#### On centralizing finances:

**RF:** "Finances will be handled by Mathew Goslinski [formerly in Canada Ministries] and Mary Beth McLean [formerly in International Ministries]. They will move into one office and will be answerable to Anne Phillips, [the LMA's senior administrator]. The three of them will make up the finance team. Mathew and Mary Beth will cease doing their previous responsibilities. Since people were handling the finances of individual departments who did not have any training in finances, we thought, ok, let's use people who have training in this area so others can be freed up to do other work. And with a decrease in staff, other duties have to be shared, so this enables them more time to take on new things."

#### On what will change, and what won't:

**RF:** "Every established procedure will

continue; they just might be done by different people. Policies and procedures continue, but the process might change. Everything else will stay in place. The current work will be enforced, reinforced and built upon."

**PR:** The first set of changes announced at an all staff meeting back in November 2009 included other money-saving changes such as a temporary suspension of the cost of living allowance, and a week of unpaid holiday. Are these measures still necessary, now that these other changes will take effect?

**RF:** "Those changes were part of the whole package that was given to us by Assembly Council [in Nov. 2009], which was the reason for all of this. But we will look at Presbyterians Sharing revenue and see if it's necessary for 2011—especially the week off. Presently, Presbyterians Sharing income looks fine; we're pleased with it. So hopefully there will be some respite from that. We're waiting for the third quarter numbers to come in before making a decision."

**PR:** I've heard some complaints about the recent decisions. Have you received any response?

**RF:** "Yes. People are asking for clarification, and are expressing concerns about what's missing. Many are asking, what about youth? So I've explained that. These things are always a concern—evangelism, growth, and church extension. And those things aren't

being downplayed. It's actually the exact opposite. This whole reordering and restructuring is to put a greater emphasis on the needs of congregations. Renewal, evangelism, outreach, and church growth are priorities we think will be better served by a department that can answer a congregation's concerns in one request.

Maybe it's human nature to set up something that then becomes more and more concrete. It's not human nature to build in flexibility and adaptability. So something like this, where there is reordering and reorganizing, are more traumatic than anyone wants.

We're a unique organization—one that can look to the future and recognize that needs do change, and the needs of the church have to be met. We need to adapt. The electronic age has revolutionized the way we function. Even 10 years ago, who would have guessed that every church would have a computer and be online? So our structure here must be part of that change along with our constituency."

**PR:** Do you have anything else to add?

**RF:** "I would hope that people will respond to the challenge, and we remain totally open. There are LMA members across the country, so I hope people will talk to them. It's a cliché—reformed and always reforming—but it's the truth. We must be reforming in our outreach and in being a relevant church in our society. I pray that it will be recognized that this is a service to congregations. That's the bottom line." ■

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# Community News

## Almanarah Dedicates New Building

WHAT BEGAN as a small group of Arabic-speaking Christians meeting in a family home has become a congregation of 100 with a new building and dedicated ministry. On Sept. 12, the Presbytery of London met to dedicate the building of Almanarah Presbyterian, London, Ont. The congregation was constituted on May 24 and had been worshipping at St. George's, London.

Almanarah is a vibrant congregation made up of individuals of Middle Eastern background who worship in Arabic and English. It boasts a very active church school and youth group, and is being served by William Khalil, a graduate of the Presbyterian Seminary in Cairo, Egypt. Khalil was recommended by the Education and Reception Committee of General Assembly to study at Knox College, which he is now doing.

The guest speaker was Moderator Rev. Herb Gale. Presbytery moderator, Rev. Keith McKee, who has also been interim moderator of the congregation since its constitution, led the service of worship. An honoured guest was Rev. Dr. Safwat El-Baiady, president of the Middle East Council of Churches, who happened to be visiting relatives in Canada when he learned of the dedication service.

El-Baiady spoke of the history of his denomination, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt. Western missionaries came to Egypt over 100 years ago to plant churches. Now Presbyterians are coming from Egypt and other countries to help the Western Church establish new congregations.

Nurtured by the Presbytery of London and the generous support of Canada Ministries, this congregation is a witness to Christ within the Arabic-speaking population of Canada's tenth largest city. —Keith McKee



Almanarah Presbyterian Church, London, Ont., dedicated its new building in September.

## Funds for Pakistan

THE FEDERAL government's commitment to match donations given for Pakistan relief following the severe flooding in August came to an end Oct. 3. Presbyterians gave more than \$317,000

with over \$281,000 of that eligible to be matched. The disaster affected an estimated 20 million people. Presbyterian World Service and Development is working with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the ACT Alliance to provide ➤

## Historic Homestead Opens

The restored homestead of Rev. Alexander Forbes was unveiled last May in Grande Prairie, Alta., recognizing Forbes' journey to the area 100 years earlier, and proclaiming to residents the legacy of Presbyterian presence in Grande Prairie.

The homestead now boasts fresh white paint and green trim, newly landscaped lawns, wrought iron fencing and the word "Forbes" across the top of its gate—signs of a \$250,000 restoration that took 10 years to complete. Members of Forbes Church solicited funds from every government, city and county source and spent hours selling tickets, stuffing envelopes and meeting together.

Forbes and his wife, Agnes came to Grande Prairie in 1910. Their trip north reads like an adventure novel, with temperatures at -40 C when they arrived in February. Photos show Agnes, in her long black skirt, standing outside a tent, surrounded by snow. They had travelled in a caboose mounted on sleigh runners, for the 300-mile, 73-day journey.

In 1911, they settled on a patch of land and built a small log cabin, which became the first Grande Prairie Hospital. The couple lived in their caboose until a manse was attached to the tiny hospital, which contained accommodation for several patients and an attending nurse. Forbes left Grande Prairie in 1925.

Forbes Church has been celebrating the 100th anniversary with special music, homecoming events, anniversary dinners, children's penny arcades, special cookbooks and fashions from the past. —Patricia Schneider



food, shelter, emergency supplies and medical care for nearly 300,000 of those most affected. —AM

### A Distinguished Presbyterian

PRESBYTERIAN Rev. Dr. Alan McPherson will join CHCH broadcasters, the city's longest serving mayor, and a well-known comedian as they are inducted into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction on Nov. 3.

McPherson left his Scottish parishes to minister at Central, Hamilton, Ont., for 25 years, from 1980 until he retired in 2005. While there he served for 10

years as chaplain to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, a reserve infantry unit based in Hamilton. In 1995 he was elected moderator of the 121st General Assembly, and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Knox College, Toronto, the same year. He volunteered on various committees within the church, as well as community groups.

The gallery aims to honour citizens of Hamilton who have made significant contributions to the community.

Steve Smith, the comedian known for his character Red Green, broadcasters

Dan Mclean and Connie Smith, former mayor Robert Morrow and businessman Mark Chamberlain will join McPherson as this year's inductees, bringing the total number of distinguished Hamiltonians to 152. —C.Purvis

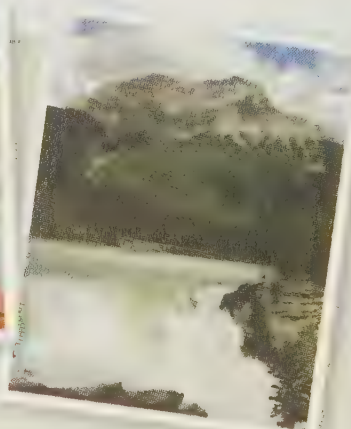
### Senior of the Year

A LONGTIME MEMBER of Chalmer's, Hamilton, Ont., has been named the 2010 Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year. An elder for more than 40 years, Peter Corbett is described as a most active and faithful member and volunteer at Chalmers. He visits shut-ins and those in hospital on a regular basis, and is known as the resident handyman.

Many Hamiltonians have benefited from Corbett's extensive volunteer work. Since retiring in 1993, he's been a hard-working and dedicated volunteer fixture at Wesley Urban Ministries, an organization dedicated to ending poverty in Hamilton. He has numerous roles within the organization, including working on the board of directors, assisting clients, sorting and managing food donations, event set-up, maintenance, equipment repair and much more. He has also helped at nearly every Wesley Urban Ministries special event for the past 17 years, and is often the first to arrive and last to leave.



Peter McLean at the Athabasca River; the Athabasca Falls, Jasper National Park, Alta.



### Bible Biker Completes Canadian Journey

Peter McLean headed home for Thanksgiving on Oct. 9, concluding a coast-to-coast bicycle journey of 77 days and more than 8,500 kilometres that raised money for his father's Bible translation project.

By the time his journey ended, over \$10,000 had been donated to the Presbyterian Church in Canada's International Ministries department, earmarked for a translation of the Bible into Hakka; his father, Rev. Dr. Paul McLean has been working on the project for more than two decades. There are about three million Hakka people living in Taiwan, making them the country's largest ethnic minority.

McLean's journey also raised money for Canada's Bikes for Bibles project and the Bible Society of Taiwan.

It began on June 18 when McLean dipped his wheel into the Pacific Ocean on the coast of Vancouver Island, and concluded on Oct. 5 when he did the same at Cape Spear, Nfld., the easternmost point in North America.

"I learnt a lot about myself physically, mentally, and spiritually," McLean told the *Record* the day before he returned to Toronto.

"The most important thing I learned about was what it means to fear God ... When you look at the vastness of the country, the distance I travelled by bicycle, and that there were other accidents on the road ... I realized that God could arrange my death at any point, but He loves me and allows me to live my life and enjoy His creation. But even death shouldn't be something to be afraid of. When you know God, have had your sins forgiven and know you will live eternally with God, there is nothing to be afraid of. So maybe it's not fearing God, but having reverence for God. However you want to put it, God is amazing, He loves us, and that is absolutely amazing." —C.Purvis



Peter Corbett receives Senior of the Year award.



Corbett has also served on the executive of the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society for eight years and played an instrumental role in the gathering of material that made the publication of *Mountain Memories*, a volume of history of the Hamilton Mountain, possible.

It was noted that Corbett's gentle, honest and sacrificial demeanor is a great example for all. —*courtesy of Chalmers, Hamilton*



Dr. Pusin Tali, president of the Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary, Dr. Stephanie Ling, convener of the Knox College Board of Governors and Knox Principal Dorcas Gordon.

### Knox and Yu-Shan Agreement

OFFERING EXCHANGES for faculty and students will be the focal point of a new five-year agreement signed by Knox College, Toronto, and Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary in Hualien, Taiwan.

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox, joined Dr. Pusin Tali, president of Yu-Shan, and Dr. Stephanie Ling, convener of the Knox College board of governors, in signing a copy of the agreement at Knox on Sept. 14. Gordon signed another copy in Taiwan during her stay at the seminary, from Oct. 24 to 31.

"Our hope is that a summer placement in a Taiwanese aboriginal church community will help produce leaders who will continue to move our church forward in a positive way with First Nations people in communities across Canada," said Marie Ainey, communications associate at Knox.

### Tech Support for Presbyterian.ca

THE CHURCH'S Communications office launched a new technical support ➤

## Gifts of Change!

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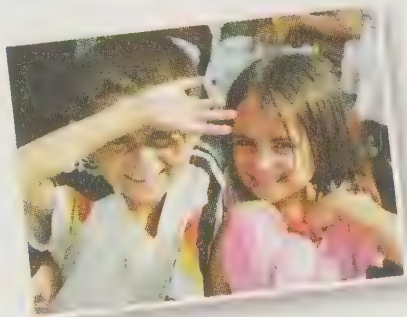
**\$30** provides a family in Malawi with seeds to diversify their crops

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system in October, geared toward better managing its websites.

Broken links, typos, and problems found on [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca) or other pages managed by the office can now be reported through an online "support ticket" system at [techsupport.presbyterian.ca](http://techsupport.presbyterian.ca)

## Residential School Survivors Rally on Facebook

VIVIAN KETCHUM, a Presbyterian and residential school survivor, has joined a Facebook campaign to build a memorial for survivors from her native Treaty #3 territory. Six residential schools operated within the traditional territory, which allegedly spans about 85,000 square kilometers in what is now north-western Ontario and southeastern Manitoba. Among them was the Presbyterian-run Cecilia Jeffrey in Kenora, Ont.

The Facebook group is aimed at generating interest and support. Search for "Memorial honouring residential school survivors of Treaty #3 territory" for details and contact information.

## CRC Approves of PCC

THE PRESBYTERIAN Church in Canada and the Christian Reformed Church in North America have mutually affirmed a relationship between the two churches.

At a 2010 meeting, the CRC's North American synod endorsed a document that outlines the shared work and mission of the two denominations, and encourages collaboration and sharing of personnel and expertise. The PCC approved the document at its 2009 General Assembly.

In a letter addressed to the PCC's ecumenical and interfaith relations committee, Rev. Bruce Adema, ecumenical officer for the CRC, said the members of the church's dialogue committee are "looking forward to getting together with you to discern how this affirmation can truly live." ■

# World News

## 'Sin-Eater' Honoured in English Village

A VILLAGE in Shropshire, England, held an unusual memorial service in September to honour a "sin-eater" whose grave was restored through a local fundraising campaign.

The group raised the equivalent of over \$1,500 to restore the grave of Richard Munslow, who was buried in Ratlinghope village in 1906.

Munslow was a "sin-eater" who was paid to eat bread or drink beer over a corpse in the belief that he would take on the sins of the deceased, should they have died without making a final confession. This was thought to ease a soul's passage to heaven.

The belief could be found in areas near the border of England and Wales, but was frowned upon by the church and was rarely practiced beyond the 19th century.

"This grave at Ratlinghope is now in an excellent state of repair but I have no desire to reinstate the ritual that went with it," Rev. Norman Morris, vicar of St. Margaret's Church, told BBC news.—*with files from the BBC*

## Allegations Against Canadian Company Dismissed

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT rejected



The grave of a "sin-eater" in England.

a Presbyterian Church's appeal in October that aimed to hold the Calgary-based Talisman Energy Inc. accountable for allegedly aiding and abetting genocide in Sudan.

The appeal was the most recent step in almost a decade of legal wrangling in U.S. federal courts. In a 2001 lawsuit, the Presbyterian Church of Sudan alleged the Canadian energy company, which had run oil concessions in southern Sudan since 1998, was complicit with the Sudanese

## Christian Communicator Group Installs First Female General Secretary

SOON AFTER A STUDY commissioned by the World Association of Christian Communication found that men continue to hog the global news headlines—despite the growing presence of women—the group installed its first female executive head.

Rev. Karin Achtelstetter, former director of communications and editor-in-chief for the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation, was installed new general secretary of WACC in Toronto on Oct. 5, during an executive committee meeting.

Achtelstetter takes up full responsibility at the head of WACC on Nov. 1. She succeeds Rev. Randy Naylor, a Canadian who has served WACC as general secretary since July 2001.—*ENI*



government's targeting of non-Muslim peoples living in the south, and argued these human rights abuses amounted to genocide.

The courts repeatedly dismissed the suit, finding the plaintiffs had insufficient evidence and could not prove the company had "purposefully" aided and abetted violations of international law.

In the past, the Presbyterian Church in Canada—which held stock in Talisman Energy—joined the ecumenical justice organization Kairos and other churches in lobbying the company to halt its indirect support of the decades-long war. The groups argued oil and conflict were often paired in the north-African nation.

The company sold its assets in Sudan and pulled out in 2002.

Talisman Energy is Canada's largest independent producer of oil and gas.—*With files from the Associated Press, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre and Kairos*

### Canadian Archbishop Steps Down During Investigations of Child Abuse

A CANADIAN orthodox archbishop has stepped down during an investigation by police and his church into allegations of sexual abuse involving pre-teen boys about 30 years ago.

Archbishop Seraphim Storheim, who is aged 66, and leads the Archdiocese of Canada in the Orthodox Church in America, took a three-month leave of absence from his duties, as of Oct. 1. In a statement on the church's website he suggests health reasons are behind the move.

The alleged misconduct concerns two young boys and relates to his time as rector of a church in Winnipeg. No charges have been laid.—**ENI** ■

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## Letter from Afghanistan



# The \$106 Investment

CHANGING A COUNTRY THROUGH GIRLS' EDUCATION. BY SHAMA MALL

HAVE YOU EVER considered the return an investment of \$106 could bring? The amount is so meager; it probably never crosses our minds to invest with a three-digit figure that many of us could easily spend in one day on frivolous things. Since many of us want investments to multiply the principle amounts, better our lives and secure our futures, we invest with more substantial amounts. However, in poverty-ridden countries like Afghanistan, even one dollar goes a long way—just imagine how \$106 can be used to change a person's life by investing in their education.

Presbyterian World Service and Development, in partnership with Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan, recognizes the need for investing in the education of children, especially girls. Through the generous support of Canadian congregations, 1,352 girls were enrolled in primary schools last year, and the quality of education was improved through teacher training and encouraging community involvement. We anticipate these initiatives will have a multiplication effect as teachers are equipped with skills and knowledge to improve the quality of education for years to come. With a long-term vision of promoting girls' education, CWS-P/A and PWS&D anticipate returns that can provide hope for a better future for Afghan people.

Afghanistan has some of the worst socio-economic indicators in the world, especially for women. Due to a lack of basic awareness on prevention and a shortage of female doctors and health workers, the country has the highest rate of infant and maternal mortality worldwide. Official sources



In Afghanistan only 14 per cent of women are literate.

indicate that 37 children die every hour and one woman dies during childbirth every 30 minutes. For a country that has suffered from war for over three decades, girls' education has suffered the most. Only 14 per cent of women over the age of 15 are literate amongst a population of almost 30 million, and 86 per cent of primary school girls are currently not attending school. Afghanistan's development depends upon reversing these trends, and education is one of the key elements to improving the

quality of life and fulfilling the hopes of Afghan people.

The outcome of educating girls has far-reaching effects—the old saying of “educate a girl and you educate a family” still holds a lot of truth. In Afghanistan, women play a crucial role in nurturing their families, either with siblings during childhood or as mothers. An educated woman is more likely to ensure her children receive an education and encourage others in her community to do the same. She will make more informed choices,



and can more effectively support her family both economically and psychologically. Women need to be given opportunities to contribute towards Afghanistan's development in politics, policy formation, health, education and beyond.

In Laghman Province where the girls' education project is carried out, we come across many girls with hopes and dreams of contributing towards a better future for themselves and their country. Sentiments expressed by a student mirror the aspiration of thousands of girls across Afghanistan: "It is the best tool I have to not just secure my future but also to serve my country," says Ayesha. However, for girls like Ayesha, going to school is a privilege, not a right as it should be, as they face countless risks and challenges such as insecurity, poverty, cultural constraints, a shortage of female teachers and a lack of schools and facilities for girls, such as clean drinking water and toilets.

Girls fortunate enough to attend school are often forced to drop out by the fifth grade. Farzana met this fate because her family could not afford her textbooks, stationary and uniform. Fortunately, CWS-P/A and PWS&D helped her return to the classroom by providing her with free textbooks and school supplies. Farzana is very keen to continue her studies; however, her enrollment is largely dependent on external support.

PWS&D has launched the Afghanistan Challenge to provide 1,800 girls with quality education in 2010-2011. We have the opportunity to help girls reach for their dreams and ensure their basic right to education is met. A gift of \$106 is all it takes to send a girl to school for one year.

For more information on this program or to make a donation, call PWS&D at 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291 or visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd). ■

Shama Mall is assistant director at Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan.

# The Other Six Days

## The Satirical Jesus

SILLY SITES AND MORE. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

**WEBSITE:** Jesus of the Week is a wonderful page that celebrates Jesus art with all its blemishes. Each week a new depiction of Jesus is posted. Most of these items were once well-meaning products that have so closely resembled satire that they have actually become satire themselves. My favourite photos include Jesus holding a baby dinosaur, and a miraculous appearance of the image of Christ on a bucket of pizza sauce in Pennsylvania. **FIND IT @** [jesusoftheweek.com](http://jesusoftheweek.com)

**BIBLE TRANSLATION:** The Brick Testament is not a translation per se. It's a Bible made up completely of depictions of biblical events. As the self-proclaimed, "World's largest and most comprehensive illustrated Bible" this "bible" has been featured in *People* magazine and *Rolling Stone* among others. And did I mention... each picture is completely and solely comprised of Lego bricks.

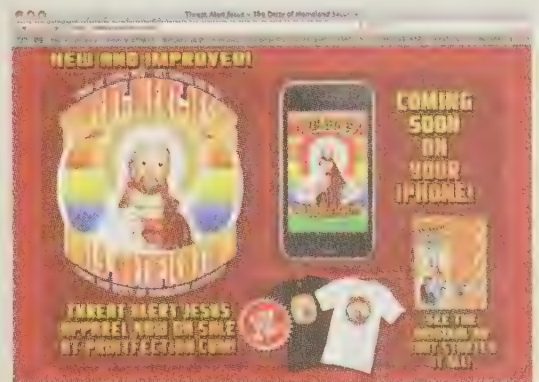
**FIND IT @** [thebricktestament.com](http://thebricktestament.com)

**VIDEO:** Drive-through church is an excellent YouTube clip. Just like anyone else, I too can sometimes self-identify with a consumerism attitude towards church. And any church leader knows it's hard to balance between people's needs and people's wants. **FIND IT @** [Search YouTube.com for "drive-through church"](http://Search YouTube.com for 'drive-through church')

**MUSIC:** The CD, *Journey of the Soul* is a Christian freelance project by local Edmonton artist Joel Shepherd. What makes this worth a mention? It's contemporary Christian music that your church can use for free simply by asking! In the artist's own words, he wanted to "bless God" and "to bless others and encourage them." I greatly appreciate the song *Suffering Soul* and it's certainly worth a listen. CDs are available online and through iTunes. **FIND IT @** [joelshepherd.ca](http://joelshepherd.ca)

**FUNNY BIBLE VERSE:** In 2 Chronicles 21:14-15, God punishes people by giving them horrible diarrhea.

**KITSCH:** Although it's hard to tell sometimes, I'm 100 per cent sure this is a joke. Still it's worth a look if you like ridiculous Christian kitsch as much as I do. The ad claims to sell a Jesus statue and phone alert Jesus that informs purchasers when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security raises the threat. Hey, it made me laugh and rest assured, now that the idea is out there somebody will probably try to make one for real. **FIND IT @** [threataertjesus.com](http://threataertjesus.com) ■



Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.



# It Started with a Dream

LEARNING ABOUT MISSION IN THE MARITIMES. BY RUTH BURKHOLDER



Left: Church at Grand Pré; top: The mission tour group; bottom: The Hector, at Pictou.

**W**HAT A DIVERSE group of 13 we were—every province but one represented; a mix of clergy and lay folk; a broad range of age and interests—all put onto a 30-passenger bus for a five-day drive last June. It was a drive interspersed with stops for sightseeing and learning, eating wonderful meals in church halls, and staying with families in communities along the way.

This Atlantic Provinces mission tour took us to see traditional sites, but also to places where God's love is being lived and dispensed today. We saw Peggy's Cove and the Bluenose II at Lunenburg; we visited the Covenanters Church and Grand Pré; we went to the site of the only First Nations Residential School in the Maritimes; we found the Hector

in Pictou and Anne's home at Green Gables; we were at the Bell Museum and the Gaelic College in Cape Breton.

To compliment all this history, we also spoke with Rev. Dr. Cynthia Chenard, minister at Iona, Dartmouth, N.S., who told us how the church ministered to the families and workers during the Swiss Air Disaster in 1998. We met with Rev. Laurence Mawhinney, the mayor of Lunenburg and retired minister at St. Andrew's, Lunenburg, (which has the longest history of any Presbyterian congregation in Canada) who told us about the realities of municipal life in the Atlantic Provinces. We stopped at the fair trade coffee roaster co-op Just Us, and with Rev. Tim Archibald as guide, explored the Minas Basin and the Kings New Minas Presbyterian Church, established in 1990.

At Indian Brook we were welcomed by Eileen Brooks, the spiritual leader of the First Nations people, who told of her growing up experiences in the residential school. We learned the story of missionary John Geddie, and how mission is still a vital part of the life and work of First Presbyterian in Pictou, N.S. We listened to Rev. Dr. Glen Matheson as he told us about being one of the first to respond to the tragedy at the Westray Mines in 1992, where an explosion took the lives of 26 miners.

We stayed at Camp Geddie, the Atlantic synod's camp in Merigomish. Through its programs, and under the leadership of director Audrey Cameron, many young people are introduced to and strengthened in their Christian faith.

At each stop along the way, whether it was for lunch lovingly and lavishly prepared for us in a church, or a place to lay our heads as we stopped with our billets, what we really felt were the "100,000 welcomes" from the church in the Atlantic synod. The meals were wonderful, the hosts gracious, the scenery marvelous, and the friendships lasting.

Each of us took something home from this trip. Below are a few favourite memories that were shared with me:

- "We are fully dressed in the mini-kilt of Nova Scotia, the tie from P.E.I. and the tam from Cape Breton. Just presenting those to us was a great sign of hospitality."
- "The interaction with the people in all the churches that provided us with meals and billets. They were so welcoming and interesting to talk to. I also learned a lot about how Presbyterianism started in Canada, and I was moved by the people who helped



disaster victims and their families. Even after all this time, their memories are still so real to them and it shows how strong their faith in God is; and the strength God has given them to endure."

- "God's grace was so evident to me as we were given the gift of hospitality through the people we met and the places we stayed."
- "Having the opportunity to experience the Maritimes and see places I'd only read about."
- "My favourite moment occurred at Camp Geddie as we were sharing Communion on the last morning. As the elements were passed from one person to another, the last one was Stan, our bus driver. As he returned the chalice to the table, it was a tangible sign that we were all one in Christ."
- "The faithfulness of the people we met; the clergy, who are caring for multiple vacant charges, in place for decades; the members of congregations caring for their church and keeping the gospel message alive in their communities; Glen Matheson, faithful in the face of horrifying disaster; just a constant sense that we were surrounded by faithful people living in hope."

It started with a dream ... a dream of showing those "from away" the beginnings of the church in the Maritimes and how the church continues to work in the lives of the people today.

It ended with a challenge ... to take this dream and share it with those we meet.

Thank you, Life and Mission Agency, the Atlantic Mission Society, and the Mission Committee of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces who put this together, and to Rev. Kenn Stright and Joan Cho who led us so well—we have been given a memory that will last for a long time. ■

*Ruth Burkholder is clerk of session at St. James, Stouffville, Ont.*



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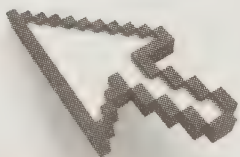


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# Mission on the Edge

AMS HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING IN ST. JOHN'S.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE 134TH annual meeting of the Atlantic Mission Society was held at St. Andrew's, St. John's, in September. The three-day event brought together 60 Presbyterians, including members and guests. Rev. Kenn Stright made history when he was chosen as the first-ever male to hold a position on the executive, that of member without portfolio.

"As God's people, we are people on the edge," said outgoing president, Ann Taylor, during the opening address. "And the AMS is on the edge of mission."

The meeting opened with worship at the 168-year-old St. Andrew's, and later featured a lavish banquet with food prepared by St. Andrew's own professional chef, and stellar music (including piano, saxophone, and violin pieces) by Rev. Jonathan Dent and the highly-trained music directors at St. David's, St. John's. Closing worship on Sunday morning was led by St. Andrew's youth.

In between the social time and quick jaunts to see the stunning ocean vistas in and around St. John's, the AMS moved through their annual business.

**Decisions of note include:**

- The men's mission project will focus on the B.C. house church mission in the Cariboo. The men previously raised more than \$9,200 to build a school in Malawi.

- Outgoing president, Ann Taylor was thanked for her three years of service. Incoming president, Jennifer Whitfield was welcomed to her new post.

- The group agreed to send funds to the Partners in Possibilities project.

- Carol Isaac of St. James, Truro, N.S., was named honorary president; she served on the executive for 16 years and has been a member since 1978.

- Joan Cho, editor of the *Presbyterian Message*, thanked the magazine's

readers and encouraged ideas, questions and submissions.

- The archivist reported they had recently received materials from 1893 from the Pictou Presbyterial.

- Youth and young adults are a priority for the AMS, and they are supported both through mission trips and through four college bursaries.

- The 2010/2011 budget was approved. It was decided that the remaining money (\$1,500) from the Anna B. MacDonald Fund would be remitted to International Ministries for work in Guyana.

- A total of \$75,726 was raised for mission work by the nine presbyterials, an increase of \$337 from last year, despite a drop in membership.

Moderator Rev. Herb Gale was present as a guest, and said his second trip to St. John's felt "like coming home." Joan Smith, president of the Women's Missionary Society, spoke of the year's new projects: refugees through Action Refuges Montreal, and building health clinics for women and children in the Gaza Strip. She also noted that concern for the future of the WMS continues, saying the visioning process is proceeding, but slowly. Missionaries to Malawi for 30 years, Glenn and Linda Inglis thanked the AMS for their prayers, letters and financial support, and shared the challenges and beauty of their work with women, children, and the disabled, and their efforts in community development. Rev. Shirley Murdock, moderator of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, said the AMS is "vital to the mission of the PCC," and charged them to "be leaders as we sail into an uncertain future." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.





"Crucifixion" by Francis Bacon, 1965

## Horror and Holiness

GOD, THE ARTS, AND THE 20TH CENTURY. BY JENNA SMITH

Christianity has been wrestling with the "arts question" for some time. It is already difficult to decide how to integrate artistic expressions into church life, but it is especially hard for Christians to decide how they will deal with secular art at all. There are issues of nudity, violence, questionable moral content, and so on and so forth.

Before we start judging which works of art (be it painting, dance, song or cinema) are acceptable or appropriate, let us prioritize two things: First, an understanding of the context in which religion and art find themselves (be it bound or unbound) in the 20th century. Second, let us try to articulate a theological approach that will allow us

to dialogue with those works that may offend us, rather than dismiss them.

There are two marking phenomena in this era as far as the church and the arts are concerned. First, a general death of the church's patronage of the arts. Second, a series of human tragedies and atrocities (such as the Holocaust), which inevitably scarred the contemporary art world since 1945, and its artists' understanding of all things bright and beautiful. As a result, poet and painter have been freed up to approach God in any way they choose, regardless of how the church feels about it. The Dublin-born painter Francis Bacon exemplifies this.

Upon Bacon's death in 1992, his paintings were selling for millions, rendering him one of the world's most celebrated artists. One *New York Times*

critic wrote, "If paintings could speak, Bacon's would shriek." The harshness of his critique of humanity is surpassed only by the grotesque nature of his images. Open bleeding flesh, exposed bones and carcasses fill the canvas. The violence in his art is palpable.

His negative view of humankind was not unfounded. He was abused by his father, a lifelong alcoholic, and he survived two world wars. Gary ➤

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He loved working with the image of the crucifixion, but not for its Christocentric significance. He was fascinated with the cross because it symbolized the horror of how one human being could treat another, and by the irony that others would gather around to watch this horror



"Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X" by Francis Bacon, 1953

Tinerow, curator of the New York Metropolitan's 2009 show of the artist's life work, said this in an interview: "Here is the problem. He was constantly rubbing our face in our own mess, the mess that men and women are capable of doing to one another. He is constantly reminding us of our own bestiality."

What is even more interesting (and touchy!) is that Bacon had recurring themes of Christian religious art in his work. He loved working with the image of the crucifixion, but not for its Christocentric significance. He was fascinated with the cross because it symbolized the horror of how one human being could treat another, and by the irony that others would gather around to watch this horror.

His *Crucifixion* from 1965 is a good example of this. The crucified figure is comprised of two decrepit bones

and a sagging rib cage hanging on the universal symbol of Christendom. The ghostly white shape on black background exudes stark death and hollowness. It is, by all definitions, a dark piece, with not much sign of redemption or hope, let alone resurrection. It is apparently untouched by any hint of theological principle or by 2,000 years of tradition. His are works that rely solely on his own personal view of Christ's death.

The difficulty of Bacon's work is that it plays with themes and an imagery that have always belonged to Christianity and yet his treatment of them is seemingly the opposite of what Christianity stands for. Tinterow commented: "His message is clear. We are meat." There is not much redemption in this! But let us come back to the guiding reflection: the 20th century's artists, in general, do not need to adhere to the authority of ecclesiastic patronage, and many of them, especially Bacon, have lived through the failures of humanity in the forms of wars, famines and cruelty. Does this mean we should ignore them? Absolutely not! We simply need to figure out how to dialogue theologically with those works that offend us.

Here are some thoughts to open up that dialogue. First, understanding the arts begins with an appreciation of them. Bacon's may not be the paintings you'll hang in your living room. But if more people came to grasp how fine the technique, colours and lines are in his works, we would be less hasty to wave them away. We would probably be more inclined to respectfully reflect upon them.

Second, there are works of art whose content is so blatantly immoral or amoral that they deserve no further consideration. But there are other

works whose messages do deserve our careful reflection, even though they are not being preached from a pulpit or executed by people of our own faith. For instance, Bacon's approach to the crucifixion is a reminder of the violence and cruelty that humans are capable of. What do we, the church, have to say about that? And while we may not agree with Bacon's final conclusion on the meaning of the crucifixion—that it is simply a symbol of human death, torture and apathy—we would do well to be reminded (even though Bacon does the reminding quite bluntly!) that Christ did die a physical, painful, humiliating death. This too is a theological principle of our faith. I may not agree with Bacon's holy-less Christ, but his human, material, wretched approach to the crucifixion is nonetheless striking.

Finally, we need to articulate a theology of imagery. God the Creator is the ultimate user of visuals. Our world is full of colour, line, texture and detail. Imagery is a very powerful tool—it can inspire, disturb, excite and strike. It deserves a bigger place in our theological and ecclesiastic lives. How can we begin to integrate them into sermon, speech, text or studies? This theology of iconography should defend the importance of images.

Artists help us face the darker aspects of our own world. This too is part of God's creation—a part we may not seek to explore. But if reactions turn from offense or fear to dialogue and reflection, we may just open the door to a world of beauty and originality. ■

Jenna Smith is getting her master's of theology in interdisciplinary studies at Université de Montréal.





# A Dream Deferred

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR ADVENT HOPE? **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

November 28, 2010 reading

Advent 1: Isaiah 2:1-5;  
Romans 13:11-14;  
Matthew 24:36-44

## WHAT HAPPENS TO A DREAM DEFERRED?

*Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
and then run?*

*Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?*

This may be African-American poet Langston Hughes's most famous piece. I hear it every year as I look at the readings

for the Sundays of Advent. The dream Jesus cast, the hope we inherited from the first generations of disciples, has been deferred for another year. What happened to it? What has happened to us?

The poem's title is *Harlem*. Hughes wrote it in the 1950s. He wrote of a community still longing for liberation after generations of preaching and promises. A community still dreaming of rebirth. A community ready to explode? Perhaps. Did Langston Hughes believe there would ever be a Barack Obama? Hughes looked forward and sighed, "Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it ➤





A church no longer crazy enough to believe the dream will come true is no church at all. A Christian community whose shared agenda no longer includes posting watch for Jesus at the door isn't really up to much

explode?" By the time of his death in 1967, Hughes had seen Dr. King, Black Power, and the civil rights movement revive the dream of a world made new. Forty-one years later, just a hair longer than a biblical generation and not so long in dream-time, many of

Hughes's spiritual heirs thought the dream had come true.

In Advent 2010, do we really believe Jesus will come again? This Sunday we'll hear Isaiah sing, "In the days to come ... He shall judge between the nations ..." Have we waited so long to hear his hammer beat swords into ploughs that we've stopped listening? This Sunday we'll hear Paul say, "Salvation is nearer to us now ..." He'll call us to wake up. Will we yawn, stretch, and reach for a hymnbook? This Sunday Jesus will tell us again, "Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." Will we check the sky on the way out of church? Or will we just think about Sunday lunch and the start of yet another busy Christmas season?

What happens to a dream deferred? What has happened to our Advent hope? I'm afraid Advent observances are tougher than ever to sell in the church today. We don't like to postpone Christmas celebrations for four whole weeks, let alone remember a dream deferred for almost 2,000 years!

Is Advent hope today a heavy load?

But a Christian life without Advent hope is no Christian life at all. A church no longer crazy enough to believe the dream will come true is no church at all. A Christian community whose shared agenda no longer includes posting watch for Jesus at the door isn't really up to much. Christianity without eschatology is no good news for the world.

Langston Hughes is remembered as one of the apostles of the Harlem Renaissance, a few who dared to proclaim good news to a community that others said was beyond hope.

I believe it's time for an explosion. Time for us to live the words we'll hear again this Advent season, share again in our candle lighting litanies, sing again in our Advent hymns. (Christmas carols too!) Dream the dream again and dare to live it toward fulfillment.

If we don't proclaim and live our hope the world will only know the destructive explosions of others whose advent hopes don't ring with healing, justice, unity in diversity. The Christian and Muslim extremists who make the news every day are sure they know what God wants for the world. This Sunday we'll actually make the same claim! We'll say and sing a dream of a world renewed in peace. Maybe God has deferred the dream and still waits for us to become so restless we'll begin to live it now! ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.

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# 2010

## Advent Calendar

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# 2010 Advent Calendar

From darkness into light. BY L. JUNE STEVENSON

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

## WEEK ONE – Setting the Scene for Advent and Christmas

NOVEMBER 2010

28

1<sup>ST</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY  
PSALM 122: 1-5

Activities and services at God's house are your priority this season. Pray for your congregation.

29

ISAIAH 2: 1-3

Open your mind and your heart to peaceful thoughts and ways.

30

PSALM 122: 6-8

Light your home, inside and outside, to celebrate the Light of the World.

DECEMBER

WORLD AIDS DAY  
MATTHEW 24: 42-44

Prepare a quiet place for this season. Pray.

## WEEK TWO – Reconciliation: Setting Things Right

2<sup>ND</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY  
PSALM 72: 1-7

Today is the Lord's Day. Quietly and thoughtfully make Christmas plans for food, gifts, cards, and celebrations.



5

ISAIAH 11: 1-5

Look in the newspaper for examples where others have been unfairly judged; where rights have been denied or ignored. Discuss what can be done to make things "right."

6

ROMANS 15: 4-11

List ways to have "right relations" with the variety of people in your neighbourhood, congregation and nation.

7

ISAIAH 11: 6-8

What can you do to make the world a more peaceful place? Talk about how to live in peace with friends and others.

## WEEK THREE – Redemption and Righteousness: Setting Things into Perspective

3<sup>RD</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY  
LUKE 1: 47-49

Pray for those for whom this season is filled with grief and pain. How can you help?

12

MATTHEW 11: 2-6

God alone can heal and save but God has many helpers. Pray for all those in the healing professions.

13

LUKE 1: 50-55

God is always reaching out to people to provide protection, wholeness and fulfillment. Reach out to someone less fortunate this week.

14

ISAIAH 35: 1-10

Breathe in the fresh air of God's creation. Celebrate God's presence in your world.

## WEEK FOUR – Restoration and Reestablishing Peace, Love and Grace.

4<sup>TH</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS' DAY  
MATTHEW 1: 18-25

Read this story out loud with family or friends. Hear the age-old story and savour its message for today.

19

PSALM 80: 3-7

God makes everything right with the people. Let your actions restore and rebuild relationships this week.

20

ISAIAH 7: 10-14

There are signs of God's grace everywhere. Find some and celebrate them.

21

ROMANS 1: 1-7

Give tokens of your love to those who deliver you from paper, sanitary waste and who make your life better.

## WEEK FIVE – Righteousness and Truth

ISAIAH 9: 2-7

Jesus is born. There is light and freedom in our lives. Share your joy with others.



26

PSALM 96: 10

God is for us. No one can be against us. Pray for the aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and that truth and justice will prevail.

27

ISAIAH 9: 2-7

With God in our lives, there is no darkness. God helps carry our burdens. Jesus is born to us to bring peace, justice and righteousness forever. Pray that all the world will share this some day.

28

LUKE 2: 1-7, 8-20

Jesus was a displaced person. His family became refugees. He was born to bring government that gives wisdom to handle satisfying ways.



...what does the Lord require of you but  
to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

The purpose of an Advent  
Calendar is to prepare for the  
coming of the Saviour Child.

As always, please read aloud  
the scripture passage and then  
reflect, pray and discuss how the  
miracle birth brings us all from  
darkness to light.

Monday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>10 1</p> <p>your heart for with HIV/AIDS.</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>HANUKKAH</b> <b>ISAIAH 2: 4-5</b> Focus on peaceful words, thoughts, and intentions.</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>ROMANS 13: 11-14</b> Be determined to smile as much as possible this week so others will see the light of Christ in you.</p>	<p>4</p> <p><b>MATTHEW 24: 36-41</b> Pray that you will be open to receive Christ at this Christmas time. Plan your devotional life for the coming year.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>o make the welcoming it means to elf, family,</p>	<p>9</p> <p><b>ROMANS 15: 12-13</b> God wants us to be happy. Plan to do something this weekend to give someone else hope and joy.</p>	<p>10</p> <p><b>MATTHEW 3: 1-6</b> Pray for servants of the Lord, like John the Baptist, Sunday school teachers and ministers, who help prepare you for the coming of the Lord.</p>	<p>11</p> <p><b>MATTHEW 3: 9-12</b> Make plans for each day this week to consciously live life as Christ would.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>preciation to mail, your , and any er.</p>	<p>16</p> <p><b>PSALM 146: 5-10</b> Look around you today. Who can you watch over so that they might experience God's love?</p>	<p>17</p> <p><b>MATTHEW 11: 7-11</b> Jesus is the "Good News" of God's kingdom. How many good news items can you find in today's news?</p>	<p>18</p> <p><b>JAMES 5: 7-10</b> Patience is not easy, especially for young children at Christmas. Discuss what it means to wait in "hope."</p>
<p>22</p> <p>erson. His s. Pray for our might have gees in mutually</p>	<p>23</p> <p><b>PSALM 80: 17-19</b> Is there anything in your life that needs restoration—relationships, finances, business affairs? Begin to set things right.</p>	<p>24</p> <p><b>MATTHEW 1: 23</b> Remember God is always with us. Pray for those who have no home or family this Christmas.</p>	<p><b>CHRISTMAS</b> 25</p> <p><b>ISAIAH 7: 15-16</b> Invite someone to Christmas worship or call and offer to drive someone. Take them for coffee afterwards and share fellowship.</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p><b>TITUS 2: 11-14</b> Christ purchased our freedom. We are people of the Truth. Plan to live in truth and grace in the coming year.</p>	<p>31</p> <p><b>PSALM 97</b> God is on the side of those unjustly dealt with. God is our hope. God guards us. Let us live in God's light.</p>	<p>JANUARY 2011 1</p> <p><b>NUMBERS 6: 22-27</b> Go into the New Year knowing that God blesses and keeps you for all your days. Be confident in your ability to lead a godly life.</p>



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# Prayer and Potatoes

PRAYER, WORD AND SACRAMENT. **BY HEATHER JOHNSTON**

**S**ummer and fall of 2009 were filled with anxiety for the Johnston family. Son Ian (in Halifax) was “invaded” by a parasite and it took months for physicians to find the culprit. Ian almost died. He and his wife have two daughters, Samantha, 12, and Stephanie, 10. Grandma in Alberta invited the girls to fly

out to be with them during this difficult time. It would be their first flight alone. I sent them each an e-mail to tell them how proud I was of them. Samantha replied, “No problem, Omi, all went well. But I pray for Dad every day just as I did for grandfather [my husband, John] last year.” Stephanie e-mailed: “Omi, all went well; we are having a great time

here. Guess what we had for dinner tonight? Everything we ate grew in grandma and grandpa’s garden!”

Prayer and potatoes—do we not need both in our lives? Indeed I would say, Manna Days at Crieff Hill’s Community give us exactly that! If you have forgotten what manna was and is all about, do read Psalm 78 for an account of God’s challenge and ►



## If you have not attended a Manna Day, please come to one—it is truly a feast for both body and soul. Indeed, it consists of prayer and potatoes!

care for God's people—and the opening of the heavens in "raining down manna" upon them—and, sadly, to their continuing discontent.

On a typical Manna Day at Crieff we arrive late morning, warmly welcomed with healthy snacks and

the first presentation by the speaker of the day. We then walk to the dining hall for an excellent home cooked lunch—round tables enable easy communication with those we might not know. Some then go for a walk in the lovely surroundings of

the community to return to the hall for the second and last instalment of the speaker.

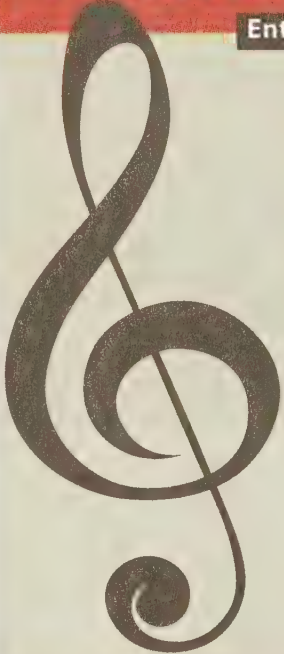
The last Manna Day I attended took place in May. Dr. Clyde Ervine of Central, Hamilton, Ont., spoke on "Boring through Presbyterianism." He used the "borer" well and helped many of us understand both the history and theology of our denomination—without boring us! He spoke about: Confession—both personal and corporate as being "the bones in our body." The Church—sharing Calvin's bon mot, "There is no perfection this side of heaven!" (A perfection we often seek if not demand from minister and congregation alike.) And, preaching and the total interdependence of preacher and listener.

Themes of other Manna Days I have appreciated have been Peace Building Works by John Siebert from Project Ploughshares in October 2008. Making Sense of the Trinity by Dr. John Vissers in May 2009. Hopeful Thinking For Harsh Times by Dr. Marilyn Craven in October 2009. Take This Moment: Winning Strength Out Of Weakness by Dr. Herb Gale in February 2010.

If you have not attended a Manna Day, please come to one—it is truly a feast for both body and soul. Indeed, it consists of prayer and potatoes!

The most recent Manna Day was Oct. 14th, when Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham of Knox College, Toronto, spoke on Living in the Call of God: Exploring Reformed Spirituality for Today. Please go to [crieffhills.com](http://crieffhills.com) for more information. ■

*Heather Johnston lives and worships in Hamilton, Ont.*



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# Worshipping with Fingertips

A REVIEW OF THE BRAILLE BOOK OF PRAISE. BY KYLE DORE

**IF** good things come in small packages, then potentially great things come in large ones—three big boxes to be exact—like the braille version of the 1997 *Book of Praise*.

Theologically speaking, the transcription of the *Book of Praise* into braille demonstrates that the denomination takes seriously the issue of inclusion. When the denomination learned there was a need for a braille *Book of Praise*, the church took action to ensure that the needs of the blind community were met. Having accessible hymns enables braille users to fully participate in singing and in planning for worship.

Practically speaking, there are several things to consider. The most obvious issue is the form in which it is shipped. It does not arrive in book form, but rather it is packaged in three boxes; one containing the six bound volumes of indices and table of contents and two boxes containing the 10 volumes of hymns. A permanent storage and filing system is critical for ongoing and long-term usage. One solution is to put the 10 volumes of hymns into large binders or a durable filing system. This way the individual hymns can be removed on an as-needed basis and stored in a safe place when they are not being used. Such a filing system requires some coordination so that the braille users may be able to retrieve the necessary hymns for worship. Establishing a filing system is completely contextual,

as it will depend on the congregation and the needs of the braille user. The two will need to work together to figure out an appropriate solution.

Each hymn is printed on its own page. The hymn's title, lyrics, author and date appear only in braille. It would be beneficial if printed labels were provided containing a hymn's number and title in order for hymns to be found by both sighted and blind people. The braille musical notation is not provided, as most braille readers would literally have their hands full reading the music and lyrics simultaneously.

As a braille user myself, I am excited to finally have the words to the hymns in an accessible format. I know that others will share in this sentiment, as braille users are now able to celebrate their Christian faith through song with newfound confidence. Financially speaking, the cost of \$30 is quite reasonable for a congregation or an individual. Congregations would not think twice about providing large print hymn books for people with vision impairments. Congregations should be encouraged to obtain a braille *Book of Praise* in that same spirit of inclusion and Christian hospitality. Although significant time is needed for the initial set-up, I believe it to be a worthy price to pay to ensure that braille readers can more fully participate in the life and work of the body of Christ. ■

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Kyle Dore is a student at Knox College.





# Real Life in Real Time

REV. HUGH APPEL TELLS HIS STORY. **BY TERRY INGRAM**

**BOOK REVIEWED:**  
**FROM PULP TO PULPIT**  
BY HUGH APPEL  
ESSENCE PUBLISHING

**THIS** is the story of a minister's life written with a clarity that brings church life to life. Having known the author for several years, I was intrigued by this account of his life and ministry. His early years were lived in Holland at the time of the Nazi occupation. Immigrating to Canada, he and his family worked hard to create a new life for themselves in a country with different customs and language. While not dwelling on how difficult this must have been, it doesn't take much imagination to realize the challenges were immense. Throughout this time, one gets the impression that they faced their new context with realism and an underlying reliance on God's grace.

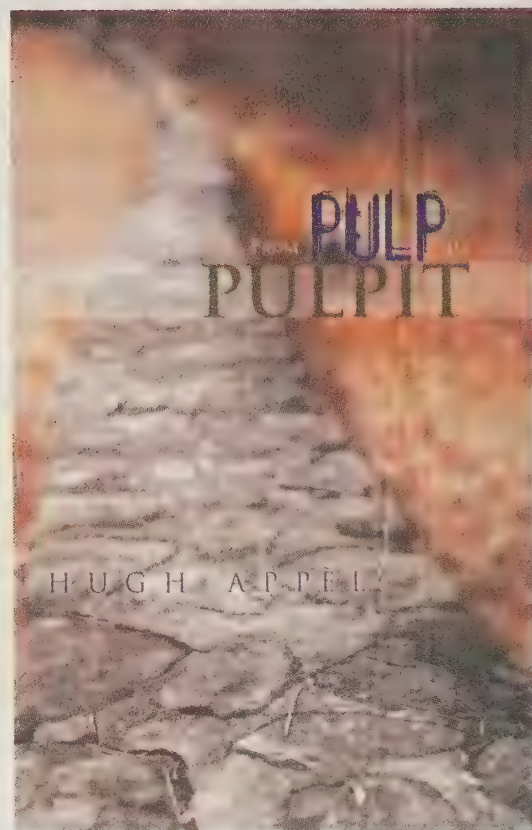
Appel began preparations for the Christian ministry (his earlier spiritual home was the Christian Reformed Church) studying theology at Knox College, Toronto, and accepting a student appointment in a small rural two-point charge northeast of the city. His recollections of studying, family

life and faithful ministry to a small group of Christians brought a smile to my face. If you have been in the church long enough you'll remember some of the people he worked with and the ways that the church organized itself.

He accepted his first call in Vancouver and from there went to the Niagara area, eventually retiring from a congregation in southwestern Ontario. Retirement is used loosely, as Appel served in a part-time ministry for several years after that date.

His style, much like his speech, is to the point in its telling, with humorous observations often directed at himself. There are stories of church buildings and manses needing improvements which at times were addressed and at other times ignored. There are stories of amalgamations or closures often at great cost to the minister and the faithful few who had struggled for so long. Other recollections celebrated congregations that reached out to others, making courageous changes to engage new people with the Good News. One senses the exhilaration and affirmation of the Christian ministry in these moments.

Appel doesn't back down from some very painful times in his life.



A potentially fatal car accident and a family member's struggle with cancer are a part of his story. So too was the call that did not go well to a congregation which has since closed. One senses the pain and difficulty of sleepless nights. His descriptions of the many times in ministry where life and death situations were faced, physical or spiritual, are vivid and telling—real life in real time.

Throughout the book he offers theological reflections and biblical verses (used sparingly) which give insight into his faith and how he sees God at work. They are offered in a gentle fashion pointing to his foundational belief in the providential care of God. In all, an easy and insightful read of a minister's experiences of church life. ■

*Rev. Terry Ingram is minister at Oakridge, London, Ont.*





# From Pew to Pulpit

PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARIES ARE TEACHERS TO THE CHURCH.

## A Passionate Education

St. Andrew's Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology

**T**he Olympic Games brought the world to Vancouver but only the media exposure was new. Representatives of that wider world had for many years already moved to our city to live or to study. The University of British Columbia is our particular mission field. St. Andrew's Hall provides a home for more than 250 students and their families; and it hosts or sponsors a number of ministries to the community in English, Mandarin and Korean. To give but one example, the local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous meets in our buildings.

This multicultural mosaic is also the context of theological education in

Vancouver. St. Andrew's Hall is a college of the Presbyterian Church which exercises its charter to teach theology through its association with the interdenominational Vancouver School of Theology. The VST faculty exposes Presbyterian theological students to a wide variety of Christian traditions. A good theological education must now also expose students to other faiths. We live in a world of many religions, and adherents to those religions are now our neighbours. Understanding and cooperation is a crying need, more now than ever. VST has recently established the Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre, headed by Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum, which fosters cooperation among the religions and provides stimulating courses for our students. This opening to the wider world reinforces the work of the Native Ministry Consortium of which VST is a part. VST has been for a quarter century the only school in North America that offers

a fully accredited Master of Divinity by extension, shaped to meet the needs of First Nations students. In recent years, it has also been possible for Presbyterian students to study at Regent College, a world-renowned school in the Evangelical tradition, while simultaneously working towards a diploma in Presbyterian studies at VST. The first graduate of that program, Richard Watson, has recently been ordained as a minister of our church. In all this, our aim is to educate ministers passionately committed to Jesus Christ and thoroughly equipped to carry out an effective ministry in the 21st century.

There is a very strong presence of Presbyterians among the faculty of VST. Six Presbyterian ministers teach or are administrators at VST. That includes Dr. Richard Topping who has just completed his first year as professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition. A good theological education should both root and stretch ►



# EDUCATION

students and that is just what can happen at VST.

We understand theological education is more than a matter of word and sacrament for future ministers. The Elders' Institute of St. Andrew's Hall, headed by Dr. Roberta Clare, aims to educate and empower elders and other leaders of our church. Through online courses, electronic resources and workshops, the EI reaches out to elders across the country. Look for an EI workshop in your region! ■

[standrews.edu](http://standrews.edu)

## Faith Matters

Knox College, Toronto

**F**aith matters at Knox College and it is faith matters that make Knox a dynamic place to explore God's call.

For over 165 years, Knox College has been committed to forming creative Christian leaders who will have a strong voice and make a difference in congregations and communities across Canada and around the world.

As challenging times face the Presbyterian Church and, more generally, religious

life in Canada, students seeking to fulfil God's call are looking for an institution that can provide them with excellent programs of study, resources and a faculty and community that will support them throughout their faith journey. At Knox College, we are constantly striving to support students in matters of faith, exploring new and exciting ways to meet the needs of our growing enrolment as well as the ever-changing demands of ministry.

With more students turning to Knox to explore the tough questions about God and ministry, we continually assess Knox's strengths with a view to meeting these diverse needs. We are expanding our research so we better understand what the church needs to be and where it needs to go. Our faculty continue to research, present and publish in areas such as mission, history and society, Christian education, pastoral theology, and biblical interpretation. The college is presently exploring funding options for new faculty chairs that will give our students an educational experience more deeply focused on the present context of ministry.

Knox College is steeped in a rich history and will celebrate the centennial

of its building in 2015. But today's world moves at a rapid pace and technology is of the utmost importance for both education and communication. This year, we have created a new website that displays the depth and breadth of our school. It allows us to connect with students and alumni from that very first phone call, through their years of ministry and into retirement. A student's life is already a journey and our website is an extension of that journey. We have created it not only with the prospective student in mind, but for our alumni—aiming to support them throughout their life.

Faith matters more than ever at this time in history. With the challenges that may lie ahead for all of us, both in the Christian church and in the world around us, Knox College remains committed to supporting students as they learn and grow in faith. ■

[utoronto.ca/knox](http://utoronto.ca/knox)

## Continuing Education February 14 - 18, 2011

PRESBYTERIAN  
COLLEGE,  
MONTREAL



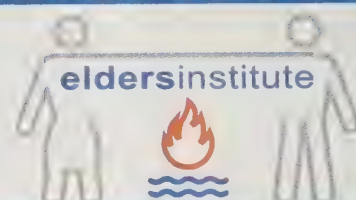
### Mark your calendars!

- **Gary Badcock**, Professor of Theology, Huron University College — on CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
- **Nancy Calvert-Koyzis**, Minister in Association, Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton Ontario — on WHAT'S NEW IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES
- **Samuel Calian**, President Emeritus of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary — on LEADERSHIP
- **David Jacobsen**, Professor of Homiletics, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary — on PREACHING AND WORSHIP

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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3495 University Street, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2A8  
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## Transformational Church Leaders

Presbyterian College, Montreal

**C**onvinced that the local church is still the best expression of God's truth and grace to a needy world, the staff and faculty at Montreal's Presbyterian College are focused on equipping both lay and ordained leaders to help congregations effectively minister to Canadian communities in the throes of incredible change. With a strong commitment to the scriptures, the Reformed tradition and its Presbyterian heritage, the college recognizes that these all speak in unique ways to the challenges of our times, and that leaders are only effective if they can make solid bridges

between these and the communities in which they serve.

"The old adage about serving God with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other might sound a little cliché," says Principal John Vissers, "but the measure of Christian leaders is not what they know, but how that knowledge impacts those they serve, in the context in which they live."

The college's location and approach to theological education are ideal settings for this kind of applied theology. The curriculum includes the basics of the program in Bible, theology, history, ethics and comparative religion—and all of them taught to the rigorous academic standards for which the McGill community of institutions is renowned—but the college's strength lies in the relevant and practical pastoral training for the skills of ministry.

Montreal, with its French and almost European atmosphere, allows students to be actively involved during their studies in congregations that look like the United Nations. The location on the McGill campus and the affiliation with the Montreal School of Theology not only encourages, but essentially requires students to interact with other faith traditions and cultural realities. The annual field trip to Cuba provides a firsthand look at the ways in which churches there have responded to and learned to minister in a challenging political and cultural context. Students typically return from that trip impressed at how much can be effectively and powerfully done with very limited resources.

During their stay, students interact with leading scholars in religion at McGill University, Christian leaders from diverse traditions in the ecumenical consortium and an engaging faculty of Presbyterian leaders committed to the Reformed faith, but ➤

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Dean of St. Andrew's Hall  
at [sfarris@standrews.edu](mailto:sfarris@standrews.edu) or [possibilities@vst.edu](mailto:possibilities@vst.edu)  
or [admissions@regent-college.edu](mailto:admissions@regent-college.edu)

**VST**  
Vancouver School of Theology

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Vancouver School of Theology

### Announcing the 2011 Visiting Distinguished Scholars

The Rev. Dr. William Willimon

Free Public Lecture  
June 10

Weekend Workshop  
June 11

Dr. Gregory Baum

Free Public Lecture  
July 9

Weekend Workshop  
July 10

More information available in  
February 2011

**VST** [www.vst.edu](http://www.vst.edu)



# EDUCATION



also with a local group of congregational ministers in the Presbytery of Montreal who model both effective and enduring ministry in local congregations.

Because congregations also need strong lay leaders and members, the college continues its commitment to lay education. Beyond the regular curriculum of courses in its lay diploma program, the college continues to innovate, offering, for the first time, training courses for elders in French and several new off-site options. A new series of evening certificate courses developed in conjunction with the Montreal School of Theology will offer in depth theology for lay people.

Other important milestones at the college include the launch of *Exploring the Faith: Essays on the History and Theology of the Reformed Tradition* by former principal Dr. William J. Klempa (the next installment in the college's studies in theology and ministry). And, along with offering degrees of Bachelor of Divinity, Doctor of Divinity and Master of Divinity, the college will be offering Master of Theological Studies as well. ■

[presbyteriancollege.ca](http://presbyteriancollege.ca)

MBIRDY / ISTOCKPHOTO

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# Good News Stories

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## Congregations in transition.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN • ILLUSTRATION BY BALLY FALLS

It seems we're always hearing about how the church is doomed. How it's no longer relevant. How congregations must change in order to survive. And change is often desperately needed. Sometimes, things go terribly wrong. But when change occurs and things actually go right, the good news is often left untold. Telling the good stories is important—because when it comes to change and transition, no one has all the answers.



# “The good stories get lost,”

said Alice Mann, during a conference on helping churches through change. “But there are a number of constructive, creative examples that can be shared. Not to replicate, but to learn from the leadership and imagination that were exercised in those situations.”

Mann is senior consultant at the U.S.-based Alban Institute, which studies nearly every aspect of church and religious life. She led a conference at Crieff Hills organized by Canada Ministries, the Vine, the General Assembly Office, and Ministry and Church Vocations—who all have a role to play when it comes to congregations in transition.

“The purpose of the event was to bring together key gifted individuals from across our denomination and resource them to be helpmates for the congregations within their synods,” said Tori Smit, team leader at the Vine. “Each synod’s regional staff and others who were a part of this gathering came with the understanding that they would make themselves available to congregations and help them as they work through the issues they face.”

John-Peter Smit, congregational development consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, and husband to Tori, helps congregations assess their strengths and weaknesses, and develop ways to grow and change. “A lot of congregations are stuck, feeling like they have no options or cannot move.

“A big piece [of what I do] is normalizing and reframing; helping people understand that they aren’t unique—this is everyone and everywhere. Also helping people see that they do have options and that there are things they can do.”

During the workshop, regional staff gave examples of congregations that tackled change in productive, amicable, Christ-centred ways, emerging healthier, stronger and devoted to their mission and ministry. The following are just a handful of those examples:

## Kirkfield and Bolsover, Ont.

**THREE SMALL ONTARIO CONGREGATIONS** within 24 kilometers of each other—St. Andrew’s, Kirkfield, St. Andrew’s, Bolsover, and Woodville—have shared ministry for years. Their individual histories go back to the 19th century—Kirkfield celebrated its 148th in June. In an act of good stewardship, the three-point charge amalgamated into a two-point this fall.

Rev. Reg McMillan tells a familiar story: “The congregation [at Kirkfield] is small, the older people are getting worn out, there are few people to do the work. They have money in the bank to keep going.”

But there’s a wonderful twist: “They decided it wasn’t good stewardship to keep going as they were,” said McMillan. “Right from the beginning, people were open and willing to change.”

So Kirkfield moved into the newer Bolsover building, and sold its own building to the local historical society for \$1.00.

“I am thrilled that the Kirkfield congregation had the wisdom to move forward with courage and faith,” regional staff person, John-Peter Smit told the *Record*. “Their decision to bless their community with their building and to bless their pastoral charge with their resources is a powerful testimony, not just to ending with grace, but to truly live out what the Bible says, ‘Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various ➤









is able to create a youth and families ministry position. The amalgamation was officially endorsed by presbytery in September, with the amalgamation service scheduled to take place Oct. 17.

## Westminster and Erskine, Ottawa

**THE AMALGAMATION** of Westminster and Erskine happened somewhat by chance. About five years ago, Westminster had been doing some soul-searching, preparing to meet the future and taking time to talk, dream and plan for rejuvenation. That spring, in the middle of this self-assessment, Erskine approached Westminster, saying they too felt the need for change, and after considering several congregations and receiving presbytery's permission, they had chosen Westminster as their future partner.

"They asked if we might be part of a dialogue to see what an amalgamation might look like," said Rev. William Ball.

Erskine brought with it 134 years of history, but despite this long-standing presence in the community, the congregation realized it was time for a change. Westminster offered a larger and younger congregation, more active leadership, and more money in the bank.

"As you can imagine, the leadership of Westminster truly wondered if this was the path we should take. What would happen to our plans? Would we get sidetracked? Would our energies be misdirected? And underneath all this, what does God want?" admitted Ball.

He said the congregation entered a period of discernment, giving themselves time for prayer and reflection.

forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

That Kirkfield had visited the idea of closing several times gave members time to come to terms with the idea, said McMillan, leading to a unanimous vote to merge with Bolsover.

Bringing in regional staff to help stimulate questions was also helpful.

Particulars like severing the manse from the property so it can be sold are still being worked out, but McMillan hopes everything will soon be settled. And thanks to some extra funds at Kirkfield, the new charge

Through that, they determined that this was more than chance, it was indeed God's intent, and that they were being given an opportunity to "reach out, to open our hearts and offer a welcome.

"The Natural Church Development process had identified the gift of hospitality as the congregation's most active gift," said Ball. "We were being asked to make use of it. Now the question was, how?"

That December, Westminster formally welcomed Erskine to their building as the two congregations amalgamated. On the official amalgamation date a few weeks later, Westminster surprised the members of Erskine by unveiling a plaque affixed on the front wall of the sanctuary stating, "Erskine and Westminster Presbyterian Churches amalgamate to serve God. December 1, 2007."

A Bible and a cross were brought over from Erskine and now sit on the communion table, and a pastoral care worker was employed to take care of the 30 or so individuals from Erskine who live in nursing homes or seniors' residences.

"With over 60 years at Erskine, I must admit it was the most painful event I had experienced, but the people of Westminster did their utmost to ensure a smooth, sympathetic transition," said Doreen McDougall, Erskine's clerk.

McDougall, who has continued as an elder at Westminster, said the congregations did several things to ensure a smooth transition, including joint services in both buildings prior to amalgamation. The coffee hour helped to establish connections, and Erskine's members were encouraged to participate in greeting and ushering to ensure they felt part of the family. Members were also kept informed of all things relating to the Erskine building, and decisions were discussed at congregational meetings prior to a vote. As a result, relationships were forged before the amalgamation took place.

## Trinity, Hamilton, Ont.

**EASTMOUNT AND ST. ENOCH'S** became Trinity on Apr. 1, 2005. It is considered one of the most successful amalgamations in the denomination, and, according to Rev. Philip Wilson (who was called to Eastmount in July 2003), "We're very, very fortunate that it has blossomed into something really wonderful."

The amalgamation began somewhat unknowingly in 2004 when, after presbytery told the struggling St. Enoch's it had to put its building up for sale, Wilson spontaneously offered the congregation the use of the Eastmount building while they figured out what to do next. After the offer was confirmed by session, St. Enoch's accepted, and began



worshipping at Eastmount at an early service on Sunday mornings. A few months later, St. Enoch's asked Eastmount about a possible amalgamation.

Creating a new identity for the new congregation was important to Wilson. "Often congregations will just hyphenate their names. But, I had seen that what they end up having is two congregations who happen to be worshipping in the same place at the same time."

So, a contest was held to choose a new name for the new church. And though worship continued in the Eastmount facility, the amalgamated congregation decided a renovation was in order.

"If we were going to be new, the building had to be new," said Wilson.

So they took the proceeds from the sale of the other church and manse and began a renovation project in 2006. "We changed the church drastically. It was not only a new name, but essentially a whole new facility. It wasn't just a matter of blending two congregations together, but two separate congregations letting go of the past to become something new.

"We covered every base we could possibly think of."

That Wilson was relatively new to Eastmount also helped, as he didn't have strong ties to either church.

"This wasn't the first amalgamation in our presbytery, but it was the most intensive. Presbytery got involved and picked us apart for every little thing. They were very diligent about looking at our plans; they questioned everything we wanted to do. Even though at times we felt they were a pain in the butt, their diligence helped us out.

"We're stronger now than we were individually, in every way."

## Central and Galilee, Vancouver

**TWO UNLIKELY CONGREGATIONS** in downtown Vancouver enjoy an amazing and fruitful partnership. Central, and Galilee Korean (which is part of the Western Han-Ca Presbytery) operate much like a successful marriage—albeit one that stumbled the first time around, learned from its mistakes and gave it another go. The two congregations are happy and healthy thanks to communication and the right attitude.

In the late 1990s, Galilee shared Central's building. According to Central's minister Rev. Jim Smith (who wasn't there during the first arrangement), it happened at a time when Central was on the rocks financially, and Galilee was looking for a place to worship. The two bodies made a business arrangement. It wasn't long before Central was grumbling about scheduling conflicts, little financial gain, and friction caused by an overall different way of doing things at Galilee.

"It was a standard landlord-tenant arrangement, which really doesn't work in intercultural sharing," said Smith. "They came, it didn't work, they left, I came, and they approached us again. We looked at why it didn't work. They came back, and it's been working beautifully for seven years now."

Smith said what lies at the heart of the current success—and why it was previously such a disaster leading in 2001 to what Smith calls "the most poisonous divorce you ever encountered"—is a shift in attitude regarding what the relationship actually is.

"I banned the words 'rent' and 'lease.' We're not allowed to use them. So we came up with the term 'shared ministry.' ➤

## Resources for Change

"These are challenging times for many of our congregations. Some are contemplating church clustering, merging, amalgamating and closing. Others are visioning new ways of being the church through resizing, renewing and re-imagining themselves as something completely different from what they have always been. Some churches are contemplating what steps they need to take to continue to be fruitful in the communities in which they live," said Tori Smit, team leader at the Vine. "All of these decisions involve risk and vulnerability. It is not easy, but it is necessary if we desire to continue to be a witness in this ever-changing world."

Smit said there are many ways to help a congregation through these times of discernment.

The Vine's website, found at [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca) under "Resources" is a good place to start. The section entitled "Congregational Development" offers the department's most recent resources and articles.

The new website Equipping For, [equippingfor.ca](http://equippingfor.ca), brings

together all of the Vine's Equipping For articles that have been featured in the PCPak. Churches can also sign up to have new articles emailed directly to them.

The Vine has a broad range of print resources available for congregations for study and reflection. A bibliography of these resources has been collected together in the booklet **Resources for Congregations in Transition**, with an expanded version due out next February as a result of the Alice Mann conference. The Vine can also be contacted at [thevine@presbyterian.ca](mailto:thevine@presbyterian.ca) or **1-800-619-7301** if congregations have specific questions, or want referrals to other congregations who might help them with a common problem.

For more information on Natural Church Development, a program designed to help churches assess their own organizational health through a benchmarking survey of church members, visit [ncd-international.org](http://ncd-international.org) or the Canadian website at [ncdcanada.com](http://ncdcanada.com).



It kind of changes the flavour and tone. Practically, we're going to share some of our space, time, etc., and they'll share some finances. But, it's a pastoral, ministry relationship."

If things were so horrible the first time around, why would the two groups take another shot? Smith said when he came to Central in 2002, he noticed they had an international ministry—mostly to Korean students—but that these students were generally segregated; clustering amongst themselves during coffee hour. So Smith and another elder enrolled in conversational Korean courses to learn some basics and hopefully bring the Korean students into the fold. The outreach didn't go unnoticed. That the minister was now saying hi, how are you, welcome, and introducing himself in Korean got back to Galilee, and eventually they approached Smith about reconciling their differences.

Session agreed, and the marriage was back on track.

"Central discovered a way to make an intercultural and inter-congregational facility sharing work," said Smith.

Part of that is ensuring effective communication and coordination between the two congregations. To this end, Central posted an elder who became an inter-congregational liaison. He does more than just listen, but rather attends worship services at Galilee and truly believes in the relationship. "He became a conduit to resolve issues instead of just smoothing them over," said Smith.

The two groups have joint meetings of pastoral teams, and expect to have joint session meetings in the future. They worked together to host the Synod of B.C. meetings in October, and share a music ministry where vocalists and musicians from one congregation occasionally play at the other service.

Twice a year, the partners hold joint clean-up days of the area and then enjoy a barbeque in the parking lot, and both put on a community breakfast, where they feed 300 people one Sunday every month. They also share a ministry to international students.

"We say there's worship here in English at 10:00 and in Korean at 2:00. We don't know or couldn't care less that it's two different congregations, let alone from two different presbyteries," said Smith.

Out of the relationship, said Smith, Central is able to help Galilee work towards a full understanding of Canadian Presbyterian polity. Some Han-Ca churches let a traditional understanding of mission influence their placement of ministers—meaning a mission board will often "swoop in" and pluck a minister out of the pulpit and drop a new one in. "There's no familiarity with the call process," said Smith.

But when the minister at Galilee recently retired, their session came to Central and asked for assistance in how to call a minister. They called Rev. Hoo Sik Kim, who is also clerk of presbytery.

"If you're just doing it for the money, forget it. It will cost more than you're going to get. But if you're doing it to expand and grow the health of the congregation, then it's a good thing," said Smith. ■

*Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.*

## Common Pitfalls

**The Alban Institute's Alice Mann has seen many congregations try and fail, and she has noticed that many get stuck in depression.** "When you're depressed, creativity is low, your attitude towards relationships is low, and you're not getting anywhere new. So the delicate balance is to face the facts, but to frame those facts in a different story. It could be a story of waiting on God, a story of Advent, a story of exploring rather than being lost. Reframing the story using the same facts helps to liberate prayer and creativity."

**Regional staff person, John-Peter Smit has a list of things to watch out for when tackling change:**

- 1. Making the amalgamation about survival or money.** It almost guarantees failure. There has to be a larger vision.
- 2. Making it about winners and losers** ("We got to keep OUR building, OUR minister.")
- 3. Proceeding to amalgamation without the people knowing each other.** Social time together is huge!
- 4. Getting too many people involved in the process.**
- 5. Letting the project get hijacked by outside agendas.**
- 6. Getting people off message.** Everyone needs to be clear about the outcome.
- 7. Stopping part way.**
- 8. Forcing the process too quickly.**
- 9. Dragging the problem too slowly.**
- 10. Leaving with the perception that closing is failure.** "I can't imagine doing anything for over a century and then concluding, 'we failed,'" said Smit.
- 11. Failing to appreciate or provide for the symbols of the congregation—pulpit, communion table, etc.**
- 12. Failing to understand the stages of grief.**
- 13. Ministers failing to understand that they will often be the focus of anger and frustration and are therefore unable to endure the discomfort it requires.**
- 14. Treating it as a pragmatic decision** rather than a holy, ministry decision.

"The bottom line is not the existence of the congregation. The bottom line is whether the mission and ministry of Christ is being carried out in the context of the local congregation," adds the PCC's mission and educational consultant in Atlantic Canada, Kenn Stright.

"There is no one method or process or 'quick-fix' for congregations. Each has its own context and each must find the way forward for itself." —A.M.



# My Nephew's Wedding

GENEROSITY IN ACTION. BY HERB GALE



The Moderator's nephew with his new bride.

I have just returned from North Carolina where I officiated at my nephew, Russell's wedding to a beautiful young woman named Jeni. It was a wonderful occasion for Shirley and me to reconnect with family and a wonderful reason for doing so. It was also an example of generosity in action.

Family and friends had been working for weeks to prepare the site—my brother, Russ and his wife, Lee's mountain cabin—landscaping, completing an outdoor shower, and pouring a concrete floor on the outdoor pavilion that would serve as the place for the ceremony and the dance floor. Friends of the bride and groom arrived days early from as far away as California, Alaska and Canada (Shirley and I represented the great province of Ontario). Some camped out on the property and helped with the set up and clean up.

One friend of the family, a florist by trade, did all the arranging of the flowers, bouquets and other decorations free of charge as her gift to the bride and groom. The neighbour next door cut the usually tall grass in his field to provide overflow parking as his gift. A friend of the bride meticulously cut out 125 silhouettes of the bride and groom dancing in a heart as a memento of the occasion for the wedding guests. The mother of the bride made heart-shaped chocolate lollipops with the newlywed's initials on them for each

guest. Other friends made little candle-light lanterns from mason jars that they hung in tree branches and nestled in the trunks of trees surrounding the pavilion to encircle the area in sparkling lights. Still other friends made luminaries from large cans to line the driveway.

AS I RECOUNT ALL THE DIFFERENT PARTS THAT MADE UP THE FESTIVITIES, I REALIZE THAT THE ENTIRE WEDDING ADDED UP TO ONE GREAT GIFT OF GRACE FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM

As I recount all the different parts that made up the festivities, I realize that the entire wedding added up to one great gift of grace for the bride and groom, who in turn gave themselves to each other as they made their marriage vows: "I, Russell give myself to you, Jeni to be your wedded husband..." "I, Jeni give myself to you, Russell to be your wedded wife..."

The whole wedding was truly one great act of generosity—a true celebration of self-giving love, whether it was friends and family offering their love and support to the newlyweds or the bride

and groom giving of themselves to each other. Which I suspect is one reason that Jesus used the occasion of a wedding to brew up his first miracle at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11). What better backdrop to demonstrate the transforming power of God's amazing grace than a wedding! I also suspect that is why Jesus used a wedding feast as a metaphor for the Kingdom of God (Matthew 22:1-14)—to demonstrate that God's love for us is like the self-giving love expressed at my nephew's wedding and at weddings held every day around the world. The story of the gospel is the story of the God who loves us so much that He willingly gives himself to us "for better or for worse" and who holds nothing back, not even God's only Son. Yes, when you stop to think about it, the theme of generosity goes to the very heart of the gospel and to the very heart of God. Now, wouldn't it be wonderful if all our activities as a church also added up to one great gift of grace? ■

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at [presbyterian.ca/moderator](http://presbyterian.ca/moderator).



# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## Knox, Oshawa, Ont.

The prayer shawl ministry at Knox dates to 2006 and has since grown to 19 crotchetier and some outside the congregation. The shawls have been sent to military personnel in Afghanistan and to families around the world; plus to many within the congregation. University students receive one in their school colours, as do the newly baptized babies and newly married couples, and to families suffering from illness or bereavement. Seen here are Rev. Emily Bisset, centre, and the crotchet missionaries.

## Parkwood, Ottawa

On the occasion of his retirement from active ministry, the session of Parkwood, with the approval of the Presbytery of Ottawa, bestowed the title minister emeritus upon Rev. Dr. Floyd R. McPhee, in recognition of his long and faithful service as minister at Parkwood from 1980 to 2001. Pictured with the cake are McPhee, his wife Claire, current minister, James T. Hurd, and elder Dennis Featherstone.

*Photo by Andre Marion*



## First, Pembroke, Ont.

Walter Inglis has served First for over half a century as an elder. He was celebrated last year with cake (of course!) along with two ministers he has served, Rev. Reid Thompson and Captain Daniel Forget.





### Sutherland's River, N.S.

Palmer MacLellan was honoured by the congregation of Sutherland's River on his retirement from the kirk session after 50 years of faithful service. Seen with the cake are MacLellan, his wife, Violet and Rev. Jeff Lackie.



### Jubilee, Stayner, Ont.

A year ago, Jubilee celebrated its 150th birthday. Standing beside the burning bush are piper Alex Currie, Rev. Darren May, then-moderator of assembly, Rev. Harvey Self and elder John McViven.

### online extra

REV. DR. HERB GALE, MODERATOR, ON A PWS&D TOUR IN CENTRAL AMERICA. SAND HILL, KINGSTON, RAISES \$2,000 FOR HAITI. A SOUP KITCHEN IN PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE. MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY, STRATHROY. VBS IN THUNDER BAY. ST. EDWARD'S, BEAUHARNOIS, QUE., CELEBRATES ITS 175TH. SEE MORE PHOTOS AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)



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### SYNOD OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Halifax, N.S.; Saint David; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-9212; [lmawhinney@bellaliant.net](mailto:lmawhinney@bellaliant.net).

Hanwell, N.B.; St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. D. E. Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; [minister@sapc.ca](mailto:minister@sapc.ca).

Kensington and New London, P.E.I.; Interim Moderator Rev. Ian Glass, 15 Messer Ave., Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 6N5; 902-892-1463; [glassicjr@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:glassicjr@pei.sympatico.ca).

Murray Harbour North Pastoral Charge, P.E.I.; Interim Moderators Rev. Roger MacPhee, Belfast Post Office, Belfast, PE C0A 1A0; 902-659-2703; [stjohnspastor@pei.aibn.com](mailto:stjohnspastor@pei.aibn.com); and Rev. Andrew Hutchinson, 18 Edgehill Terrace, Stratford, PE C1B 2V4; 902-569-5621; [asmh@islandtelecom.com](mailto:asmh@islandtelecom.com).

River John and Toney River, N.S.; St. George's and St. David's; Interim Moderator Rev. Lara Scholey, 1159 Campbell Hill Rd., RR 2, Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0; 902-485-6137; [bethel@bellaliant.com](mailto:bethel@bellaliant.com).

### SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Ingleside, Ont., St. Matthew's; Full-time, Interim Moderator Rev. Mark Bourgon; PO Box 704, Ingleside, ON K0C 1M0; 613-537-8929; [markbourgon@yahoo.com](mailto:markbourgon@yahoo.com).

Manotick, Ont., Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Cedric Pettigrew, 340 Claridge Dr., Ottawa, ON K2J 5C2; 613-843-1446; [cedric.pettigrew@sympatico.ca](mailto:cedric.pettigrew@sympatico.ca).

Ottawa, Ont., St. Andrew's; Director of Christian Development; Interim Moderator Rev. Susan Clarke, c/o St. Andrew's Kars Presbyterian Church, PO Box 381, Maitland, ON K0E 1T0; 613-348-3088; [revsvclarke@yahoo.ca](mailto:revsvclarke@yahoo.ca).

Ottawa, Ont., St. Stephen's; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. MacArthur Shields; 145 Pineridge Rd., Carp, ON K0A 1L0; 613-839-2135; [shields612@gmail.com](mailto:shields612@gmail.com).

Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Convener of the search committee: Bill Pearson, 491 Angus Campbell Dr., Pembroke, ON K8A 8K7; 613-732-1885; [bpearson62@sympatico.ca](mailto:bpearson62@sympatico.ca).

Winchester, Ont., St. Paul's; St. Andrew's, Chesterville; Morewood; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jim Ferrier, PO Box 131, Maxville, ON K0C 1T0; 613-538-2582; [jim\\_olga@sympatico.ca](mailto:jim_olga@sympatico.ca).

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Ashburn-Brooklin, Burns; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Lee, 2501 Warden Ave., Toronto, ON M1W 2L6; 647-290-0461; [kevinmacleee@bridlewoodpc.ca](mailto:kevinmacleee@bridlewoodpc.ca).

Aurora, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 ext. 223 or 1-800-619-7301; [dmuir@presbyterian.ca](mailto:dmuir@presbyterian.ca); [standrewspresbyterian.com](http://standrewspresbyterian.com).

Bramalea, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 55 Edith St., Georgetown, ON L7G 3B4; 905-877-1252; [stpaulspresbyterian@bellnet.ca](mailto:stpaulspresbyterian@bellnet.ca).

Newmarket, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; [minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca](mailto:minister@stjohnspresbyterian.ca).

Port Perry, St. John's; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Caleb Kim, 69 Queen St., PO Box 867, Fenelon Falls, ON K0M 1N0; 705-887-3901; [caleb67kim@yahoo.ca](mailto:caleb67kim@yahoo.ca).

Stirling, St. Andrew's; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jennifer Cameron, 520 Bridge St. E., Belleville, ON K8N 1R6; 613-962-8771; [jenn.cameron@cogeco.ca](mailto:jenn.cameron@cogeco.ca).

Toronto, Toronto Formosan; Full-time; Interim Moderators Rev. Wes Chang, [tmppc1997@gmail.com](mailto:tmppc1997@gmail.com); and Rev. Beth McCutcheon, [mb.mccutcheon@utoronto.ca](mailto:mb.mccutcheon@utoronto.ca).

Toronto, Toronto Korean; Senior minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kyung-Seuk Min, 67 Scarsdale Rd., North York, ON M3B 2R2; 416-447-5963; [tkpc.org](http://tkpc.org).

**SYNOD OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO**  
Atwood; Interim Moderator Rev. Cathrine Campbell, PO Box 477, Brussels, ON N0G 1H0; 519-887-9831; [cecampbell@wightman.ca](mailto:cecampbell@wightman.ca).

Beamsville, St. Andrew's and Smithville; Interim Moderator Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi; c/o First North Pelham Presbyterian Church, 606 Metler Rd., RR 3, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0; 905-892-4716; [vasar@talkwireless.ca](mailto:vasar@talkwireless.ca).

Beechwood, St. Andrew's; Half-time; Rev. Steve Boose, 152 Albert St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1V5; 519-245-2292; [revboose@bellnet.ca](mailto:revboose@bellnet.ca).

Brantford, Central; Interim Moderator Joel Sherbino; 519-442-2842; [joel@parispresb.ca](mailto:joel@parispresb.ca).

Brussels, Melville; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, c/o Knox Presbyterian Church, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; [donpmccallum@wightman.ca](mailto:donpmccallum@wightman.ca).

Burlington, Burlington East; Interim Moderator Rev. George Beals, c/o Burlington East Presbyterian Church, 505 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E3; 905-575-5525; [gbeals@mountaincable.net](mailto:gbeals@mountaincable.net).

Crinan, Duff Largie and Argyle; Half-time minister for two charges; Interim Moderators Rev. Amanda Birchall and Rev. Deb Dolbear-VanBilsen, c/o Glencoe Presbyterian Church, 177 Main St., PO Box 659, Glencoe, ON N0L 1M0; 519-287-2743; [revdeb17@sympatico.ca](mailto:revdeb17@sympatico.ca).

Fingal, Knox; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Kevin Steeper; 519-438-3492; [ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca](mailto:ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca).

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# Employment Opportunities

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We are a thriving congregation located in the city of Burlington, Ontario (population 165,000) situated at the western end of the Greater Toronto Area. Burlington is a vibrant community centrally located in the Golden Horseshoe. Burlington East was established in 2007 following the amalgamation of two former Presbyterian congregations in our city. Average weekly attendance has grown to 150 and in the last 3 years we have welcomed over 40 new families to our faith community, a number of which are accompanied by young children. We are a growing congregation with a traditional Presbyterian worship style. Until recently, we have been served by an interim minister and are now seeking a minister who will help us further our commitment to growth through strong leadership in Worship and Preaching as well as personal leadership in Crisis Visiting, Home Visiting and Personal & Spiritual Development.



Please contact our Interim Moderator: Rev. George Beals c/o Burlington East Presbyterian Church  
505 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E3 Tel: 905-575-5525 [gbeals@mountaincable.net](mailto:gbeals@mountaincable.net)

## KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ST. THOMAS, ON is seeking a Full-Time Minister



After a time of pulpit vacancy and interim ministry, Knox Presbyterian Church, St Thomas, is looking ahead to the future to which God is calling us. We seek the minister whom God has planned to share that future with us. We believe that person will engage, challenge, lead and encourage us in worship; respect our traditions while keeping us open to new ideas; motivate and inspire us; connect faith with daily living; help us care for our community; grow with us and be cared for by us, as we work to meet the needs of youth and young families, while caring for the elderly. Are you the person we are looking for? Is God calling you to Knox?

To explore this further, contact our interim moderator, Rev Andrew Reid, New St James Presbyterian Church, 280 Oxford Street E, London, Ontario N6A 1V4; 519.434.1127; [areid@newstjames.com](mailto:areid@newstjames.com)



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For further information, please contact:  
Convener of the search committee: Bill Pearson  
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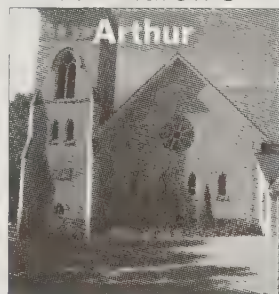
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Hamilton, The South Gate; Interim Moderator  
Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington,  
ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640;  
southgate.moderator@yahoo.ca.

Ilderton, Bethel; Part-time; Carl Crossett,  
Convener of Search Committee, 14846  
Fifteen Mile Rd., RR 2, Denfield, ON  
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Kilmartin, Burns Mosa (Glencoe); Interim  
Moderator Rev. Michael Stol,  
c/o Westmount Presbyterian Church,  
521 Village Green Ave., London, ON  
N6K 1G3; 519-472-3443.

London, Oakridge; Associate minister;  
Rev. Terry Ingram, 970 Oxford St. W., London,  
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Normanby, Knox, Holstein, Knox and Dromore,  
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Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator  
Rev. Ena van Zoeren, PO Box 421,  
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enavanz@gmail.com.

St. Thomas, Knox; Rev. Andrew Reid, New St.  
James Presbyterian Church, 280 Oxford St.  
E., London, ON N6A 1V4; 519-434-1127;

areid@newstjames.com.

Teeswater, Knox and Kinlough; Interim  
Moderator Rev. Chuck Moon, PO Box 1823,  
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## SYNOD OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

No vacancies at this time.

## SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

Regina, First; Co-Interim Moderators Rev. Ina  
Golaiy, 718 Elm Cres., Weyburn, SK S4H 0S7;  
306-842-1942; golaiy@sasktel.net and Rev.  
Devon Pattemore, 66 Park St., Yorkton, SK S3N  
0T3, 306-782-3659; knoxpresb@sasktel.net.  
Saskatoon, Calvin-Goforth; Interim Moderator  
Rev. Stewart Folster, 530 Sherry Place,  
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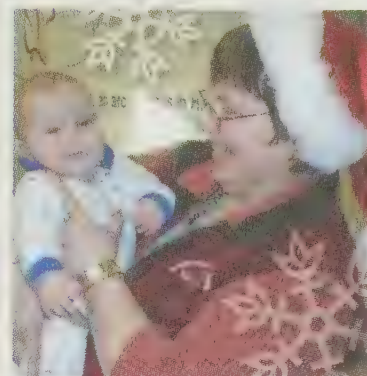
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Church, 4612 Varsity Dr. NW, Calgary, AB  
T3A 1V7; 403-288-0544; b.smith@vapc.ca.  
Sherwood Park, Alta., Sherwood Park; Interim  
Moderator Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf,  
c/o Dayspring Presbyterian Church, 11445  
40 Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 0R4;  
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## SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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# BUILDING HOPE



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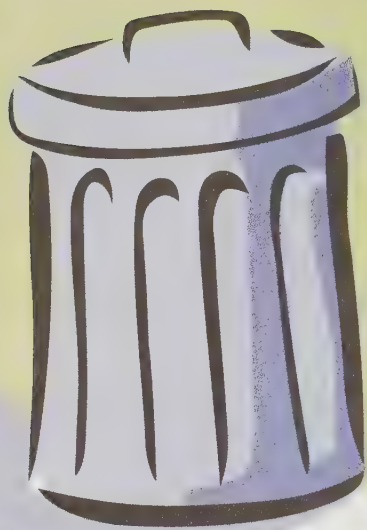
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# Called to Wonder

## Garbage Island



Researchers have recently discovered a large floating mass of debris in the Pacific Ocean somewhere between California and Hawaii and have nicknamed it the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Some estimates say it could be twice the size of Texas! Just Google "garbage island" to find out more.

**Do you think this is what God had in mind when He created the world?** Read **Genesis 1:20-28 and 2:15**

During our time on earth, we have been charged, like Adam, with taking care of the earth and its creatures. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it". Showing respect and caring for the land, the ocean, and the air is our duty as believers in Christ.

This world is a gift from God, and many, many lives have been lost protecting it and defending us. You are probably seeing a lot of poppies on collars this time of year. In fact, over half of all Canadians wear a poppy in November to recognize, remember and honour the men and women who have fought to defend us. The poppy is another of God's beautiful creations, and it is just perfect as a symbol of remembrance.

We can become defenders too—we can aim to defend what God has created for us and to protect the beautiful gift of our free country and our global community.



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(common names include corn poppy, corn rose, field poppy, Flanders poppy, red poppy).

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## About the time I turned 29, most of my fears were realized. I was diagnosed with a very serious cancer, was given a very bleak prognosis and then had to go through all the medical procedures

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

on the steam locomotive switching a few freight cars below. She was no doubt thinking, 'Every little boy loves trains.' About the time we looked, the engine loudly belched steam, the whistle shrieked and I freaked. From then on I was absolutely terrified of trains, right up until the time the CPR had the good sense to change to diesel electric engines.

When I was six years old, my parents' marriage fell apart and I went to live with my Dad in south-eastern B.C. We took the bus from Kaslo to Castlegar to catch the plane, a little DC3 that flew from Castlegar to Cranbrook in those days. Dad was a big boxing fan and for some reason Premo Carnera, who had been the heavyweight boxing champion for a tad less than a year back in the 1930s, was on the plane. There was nothing for it but that Dad had to go and get "The Champ" to come to the back of the little plane to meet me. I was cowering in the back seat of the little plane and, though he was pushing 50 by then, "the Ambling Alp's" near-seven foot, 300-pound body coming at me all crouched over and filling the whole plane made a big impression. When he took my head and literally wrapped his massive hand around it and gave it a shake saying, "He's a nica leetle fella," I wet my pants. From then on I was terrified of planes.

Planes and boats and trains, just a few of my childhood phobias. Add to that list sirens, bees, heights, inoculations, loud noises of any kind—and the list went on and on—to put it mildly, childhood for me was often pretty uncomfortable. Fear is a powerful driver. As I blossomed into my teenage years my worst fears became illness and death. They terrified me.

About the time I turned 29, most

of my fears were realized. I was diagnosed with a very serious cancer, was given a very bleak prognosis, and then had to go through all the medical procedures, which included lots and lots of needles, vomiting and a general ravaging of my body that only a whole year of chemotherapy could inflict. This was followed by two 30-day courses of radiation treatment that left me looking and feeling like an atomic bomb victim. Miraculously I beat the cancer and my fears.

At this point it's tempting to say something about beating fear by facing fear, and I suppose there was an element of that in my experience. But the biggest element was a Scottish preacher and the scriptures. Hamish would come to visit me at least a couple of times a week. He always had his Bible in tow. I would pour out my heart to him, he would read a verse or two of scripture and then we would pray. I was a new Christian, having come to it out of desperation as much as anything else, but the power in those times was shocking. I would glom on to the scripture verse that Hamish read like a lifeline, and it became a promise of God to me. I did not believe it to be true, it was the

Truth for me. On one occasion, when I was to the point of being really immobilized with fear, Hamish held me and prayed the scripture, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) This scripture was the truth that powerfully bracketed my life and prayers for weeks.

And so I learned to filter my life through scripture. I learned to hold all of my life up to the light of scripture. I learned to examine all of my life through the lens of scripture. I learned to ground all of my life upon scripture. At one point Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) For me, that's exactly what it was like. As to life, and fear, and liberty, I can put it no more clearly. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*



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# Trains and Boats and Planes

FILTERING LIFE THROUGH SCRIPTURE. **BY DAVID WEBBER** ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

*I HAVE TO CONFESS;* since my earliest years I have been powerfully driven by fear. When I was about three years old and living in Kaslo, a little hamlet on the western shore of Kootenay Lake in southern B.C., my mother and I would take trips up the lake on the old CPR sternwheeler, the Moyie. Our destination was always the remote community of Argenta, where my mother's family lived. There were few roads back then and the Moyie would nudge its nose up on any beach where there was a fruit farm or other tiny settlement to take on or disembark everything from milk cows to people. The Moyie was a combination freight and first-class passenger steamship, 50 metres long, three decks high, stern-driven and flat-bottomed; the kind very common on many of the large

lakes and rivers of B.C. from the 1890s until the 1950s (the Moyie plied Kootenay Lake from 1898 to 1957). Kootenay Lake was and is known for vicious storms that can kick up without any notice, and flat bottom sternwheelers were noted for not weathering them so smoothly. On one of our trips up the lake the wind whipped up, the Moyie acted up, and I threw up. I had just drunk a bottle of my favorite Stubby Orange pop. From then on I was terrified of the old Moyie, and Stubby Orange made me sick to my stomach.

In Kaslo, we lived on the ridge not far above the rail yard that was associated with the CPR barge system on the lake. One day when I was about four years old, my mom took me to the edge of the bank to gaze down

continued on page 49





## Burns, Milverton, Ont.

BY JEAN BAIN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KIMBERLEY SMITH

This church has been completely renovated, insulated, and decorated. At present, the first set of stained glass windows are being re-leaded. We have a senior and youth choir, as well as 24 volunteers in the church school.

The congregation is very happy to have Rev. James K. Stewart as our full-time minister. He is currently pursuing his doctorate. Rev. Stewart and wife, Marjorie are very capable and dedicated to their Christian work.

We host the synod-wide rural church workshop each October. This year's speaker was Dr. Deborah Rundlett, an adjunct professor at Ashland Seminary, Ohio. Debbie is also the guest speaker at our 152nd anniversary.

The Burns Church women host 700 people annually at our roast beef dinner in November. Many in our congregation participate in the work and fellowship of this dinner, and our motto is, "eat all you want."

Another P.A.N. (Presbyterians Aiding Nicaraguans) mission trip to aid the people of Los Romero, Nicaragua, happened in January 2010. The mission trip of 2008 was a spiritually blessed adventure, prompting many members of the team to return. ■





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# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

DECEMBER 2010

Best  
Denominational  
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Church Press

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# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

DECEMBER 2010



## Finding God

Jasmine Tracey, 11, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



Judy Mallory, St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.



Sarah Strasler, 10, St. Andrew's,  
Streetsville, Ont.

### COVER ART CONTEST WINNER!

Jo Anne Maki, 54, St. Andrew's, Kamloops, B.C.

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# Don't Make God Small

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIFT YOURSELF WITH A LARGER VISION OF THE DIVINE. BY DAVID HARRIS

**O**n my way back home from a recent business trip I picked up an airport novel for the long flight. I've long been a fan of spy thrillers and managed to find one set a couple of years ago in the Middle East.

A short way into the book I was intrigued to find a minor subplot involving a Muslim professor of religion in Iran. In a storyline otherwise driven by religious and political fanatics, this professor voices quiet doubt about the fundamentalists' unrelentingly narrow and destructive certainty.

The professor has written a book, the fruit of lifelong study and reflection. Discussing the manuscript with his grandson, he notes that "all religions have problems." Puzzled, the grandson asks: "What is the common problem?"

His grandfather replies, "The god that they worship is too small."

Most contemporary novelists give religion a wide berth. The few that do incorporate faith in a plot rarely do so sympathetically. Yet just a few pages later in this novel, grandfather tells grandson that religion boils down to two things: "Love God" and "Be kind, compassionate, merciful to your fellow man." Everything else, he says, is "just details."

The tendency is for words to leap from our throat to argue the importance of those details. But is that a helpful response, I wonder? Is it not at least as important today to assess what different faiths have in common? And is this not especially true for Jews, Christians and Muslims, all of whom believe that there is but one God who speaks to all people in all times and places?

It's interesting to look back 2,000-odd years to the religious marketplace of Jesus' day. The Middle East under



**'Love God' and 'Be kind,  
compassionate, merciful  
to your fellow man.'  
Everything else is  
'just details'**

the Roman empire was a riot of voices of followers of different religions.

Canada's religious landscape today is not dissimilar. Although we are still an overwhelmingly Christian population, all the world's major religions are represented here in fairly significant numbers.

The professor of religion in the novel I read says that loving God and being compassionate towards others are the two key elements of faith. In fact, one flows from the other. If we love God, we cannot help but be compassionate towards others.

To some extent, the rituals and detailed beliefs of religions are expressed in formal worship. For Christians, this is primarily in Sunday worship. Our details are hardly under threat there and we can celebrate them with joy.

Compassion, on the other hand, is something that transcends those details in daily living. One of the consequences of the smaller world we live in is that the pain and suffering of

other humans is brought to our doorstep on a daily basis.

We cannot have enough compassion for others.

As members of the dominant religion in this country, we should be joining hands with people of other faiths to help those around the world who through no fault of theirs go hungry and die early from disease and war.

In the meantime, the Presbyterian Church does join with other Christians around the world to carry out compassionate work through Presbyterian World Service and Development, and it deserves our generous financial support.

Compassion and the largeness of God are also the focus of this month's cover story, Finding God. Prof. Pam McCarroll has compiled responses to a questionnaire sent around the church about how people experience God in their lives. The God revealed in the answers is not small but a large, generous God who only requires us, in the words of Micah to "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God."

We are approaching the season of the Incarnation, when God became small for us in order to point a way to the expansive greatness of the divine love. May you find a way to experience and celebrate God's great love for you and your family. And may you be compassionate to others, sharing your riches with those who have none, just as God shares His riches with us.

All of us at the *Record* wish you a joyous and loving Christmas. ■

*David Harris*



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## No 'New' Department

*Re Staff Shake-Up at Wynford, November*

In the article there is a correction  
I would bring to your attention.  
There is no "new" department being  
formed. Administration and Program  
Support has been in existence and  
staffed by a general secretary and a  
senior administrator since 1992. The  
configuration taking effect in January  
will have the two staff responsible  
for finance incorporated into this  
department from their current  
departments and handling all financial  
matters for the entire agency. There is  
no increase in staff and there is not  
a "new finance department" coming  
into existence. Thank you for bringing  
this to the attention of your readers.

**RICK FEE**, GENERAL SECRETARY,  
LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

## Further Studies

*Re Because I See Hope, September*

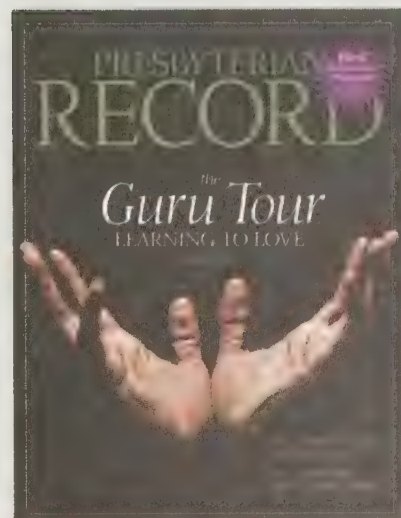
Following Laura Ashfield's excellent  
article, I am sure readers would be  
interested in reading, *A Wall in Palestine*  
by Rene Backman. It enlarges on many  
of the issues addressed by Ashfield.

**BILL KERR**, OTTAWA

## No-Name is Wrong

I am dismayed that you would publish

# Letters



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two no-name letters in the November  
issue. Just imagine if there was some  
scurrilous content. My grandson's  
favourite saying is, "That would  
be wrong!"

**ROBERT FLINDALL**, WOODSTOCK, ONT.

**Editor responds:** Choosing to  
publish anonymous letters or articles  
(there is one this month) is always  
tricky. Authors, for their own reasons,  
feel exposed in raising an issue. Both  
letters offered opinion or advice which  
we felt was important to share ➤

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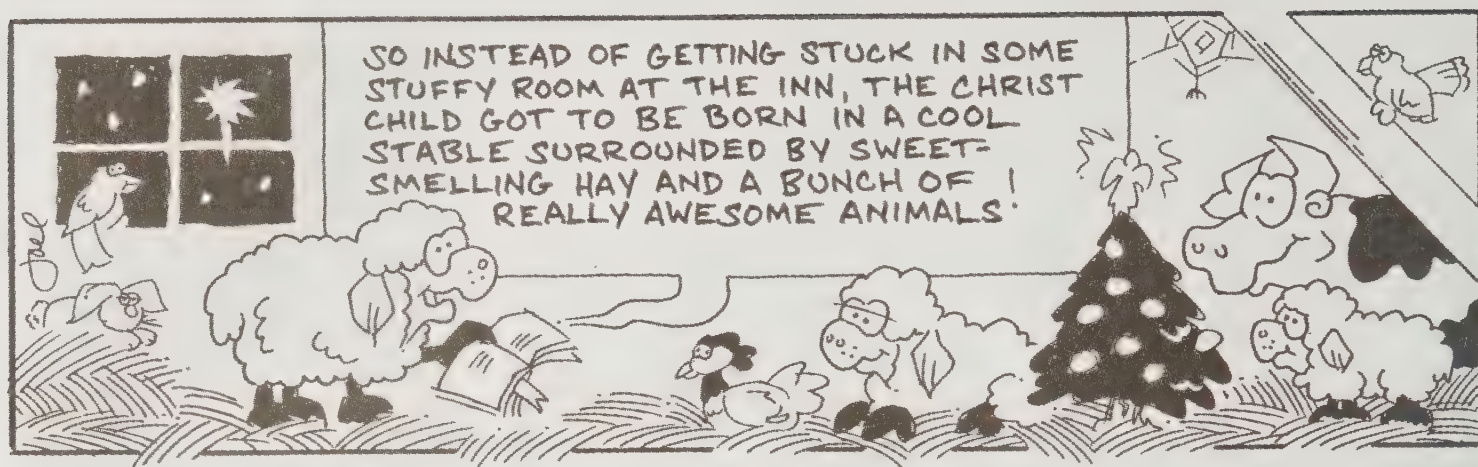
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## Pontius' Puddle



and to encourage conversation within the church. That is, the publication of each letter was weighed, as is every letter.

### Hands Declare Love, Not Devil

I'm very sure that you will be inundated with responses to the letter regarding "devil hands" in November.

The letter writer is mistaken when he writes that the young people in the March 2007 issue of the *Record* are displaying devil's hands. A closer examination shows their thumbs are out too, which indicates that the teens

were using American Sign Language. The sign means, "I love you." Many young people use this sign, and yes, I "Googled" for this information.

KAREN LOCKE, WINDSOR, ONT.

### Sympathy and Sadness

*Re Teen Leaves Church After Role in Pride Day Questioned, October*

I am upset and saddened by what has taken place in the church in New Westminster, B.C.

Tory Inglis, in my opinion, is a first-class Christian model for all young people.

God knows her, loves her and wants her. Yet society, and even some members of our beloved church, remain ignorant of the "nature of things." I feel that the majority prefers to remain ignorant; it is easier and more pleasant.

There is a splendid, many-years-old group which meets monthly in St. Andrew's on Simcoe Street in Toronto. St. Andrew's Gay and Lesbian Association has, and has had, the approval of the several ministers and members of the kirk session over the years. I am a longtime member of SAGA.

Please Inglis family, don't leave the Presbyterian Church; we need you and we are proud of Tory.

Our family has taken part in Toronto Gay Pride Day since its start, a long time ago. I am a very aged person! My children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren take gay and lesbian friends as friends, no hyphenated title required.

JOAN M. BELL, TORONTO

I sympathize with Rev. Tim Bruneau.

The leader of a junior youth group, photographed as part of a Pride Society does not have the patina of propriety as say, being featured in a Stephen Lewis Foundation walk or pictured in a Terry Fox Run.

Bruneau is a minister burdened with the PCC's position on homosexuality. Andrew Faiz courageously calls the position, "dipsy-doodling." It's a kind



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of schizophrenia.

No one should imagine that the United Church of Canada, of which I am a minister, is much better. Nationally, the UCC encourages same-gender weddings. Recently, a gay couple, one of them a UCC member, found that none of the several congregations in their area would permit it. Here, a kind of bipolarity.

Nonetheless, the PCC and the UCC are leading ambiguously, emerging all too slowly from decades of Christian oppression of gays and lesbians.

At New Westminster and elsewhere round the fire in the courtyard, there are pronouncements, protestations, prevarications and explanations.

One person, Karen Inglis, chooses the right path. She supports her lesbian daughter.

REV. ELDON HAY, SACKVILLE, N.B.

### **Borg an Alternative Voice**

*Re Borg Cannot Be Ignored,  
Letters, September*

After attending a weekend lecture series conducted by Marcus Borg, and after reading some of his works, I must admit his approach to Christianity and Christ in particular is refreshing to say the least.

I am a 62-year-old man who attended Sunday school from a very early age and was subjected to lessons which reflected a God who was to be feared, or else. He was portrayed as a person (they called "Him" God) who knew everything I did or did not do, and even what I was thinking. This had a profound influence on my comprehension of God and the Bible. I thank God that after many years, I am past that view of God, who was introduced as a terrorist to be feared. I learned from Prof. Borg how to consider different ways of hearing "the message;" a message from a distant past and a completely different culture. From his teaching, I learned that the

real message was not fearsome, but spoke to me today. Not once during his lecture did I ever hear him say "you must believe this or think that," but he asked only that we keep our minds open to Christ (not interpretation).

I still see myself as a valuable member of a congregation, but Borg's thoughts have helped me explore my view of the church without compromise. It is no secret that many have given up, or they are on the edge of doing so. To such as those who find the literal interpretation of our Lord's words a burden not worth the effort, I commend Borg and others who at least want to offer an alternative to the "do this, think that theology" as perpetuated by even those in high offices.

WILLIAM JEFFREY, SARNIA, ONT.

### **Eloquent Emily**

*Re Spiritual Presence, September*

I was moved by Rev. Emily Bisset's article. She expressed so eloquently the way in which we observe the sacrament of Communion in the Reformed tradition.

Articles like this are surely one of the reasons that the *Record* is regarded as "top-rated."

SHIRLEY HUCKINS, GODERICH, ONT.

### **Guided by God**

*Re A Letter Home, The Messy Table,  
Sept. 6*

I, too, went through a job loss a few years ago (after 26 years!) and had the feelings of anger, frustration, fear, loss of self worth. After a few months, I grabbed onto a job that I ended up hating, and felt such despair! However, I truly believed that God was guiding me along a path that tested me, my stamina, my faith (that was sorely lacking! I hadn't been to church for more than a few token Christmases for years and years.) After nearly a year at this gruesome job, one Saturday, for some unknown reason, I looked at ➤



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Susie Hamilton, 8, St. Mark's, Charlottetown



Claudia Maclean, 9, and Leanne Hardy, 19, Freeland, Tyne Valley, P.E.I

the classifieds in the paper—the tiny ones that no one notices—and there was a job posting for St. Andrew's, Ottawa, running the church office. Hmm, different (I had been in banking for 35 years!) but why not... Well, not only have I been running that church office for over three years now, but this wonderful church and its amazing people have given me more faith and wisdom than I ever would have hoped for. Yes, God has guided me along this path and given me peace in my heart. I am not perfect, never will be, but it's a start!

Dearest Katie, we miss you, but I think of you and your precious family every day, saying little prayers for you, and know that you were one of the ones that has helped me in my journey. I know that your path will cross so many more, and you will help them too. Blessings to you all!

ELIZABETH, ON OUR WEBSITE

**Katie Munnik replies:** I heard a wonderful sermon on Sunday about the preaching that a congregation does. The gospel preached in a church isn't just the gospel read from the lectern but the gospel lived by those in the pews. Amen to that.

### Tearing Down Walls

*Re If All Are One,  
How Far Does it Go? June*

"Do we hear Paul call us into more danger?" I don't believe there was ever a time-limit set on the length of the time that ministering the word of God would not attract danger. The masses today may have, and continue to erect mighty walls to protect against Paul's wise words. But I don't think God intended for us to stop trying to tear down those walls.

CAROL MERRILL, ON OUR WEBSITE

### Defining Growth

*Re A Revival Challenge,  
Letters, September*

So who gets to decide what constitutes a significant ministry? That may be me splitting hairs, but it seems like a valid question—how do we define growth?

JEFF LACKIE, ON OUR WEBSITE

### A Third Way

*Re Hymns to Feed the Imagination,  
In Song, Sept. 1*

Many growing contemporary churches are tossing out all traditional hymns in their worship. I believe this to be as big a mistake as rejecting all contemporary hymns. As a

denomination that prides itself on a balanced approach to theology, we should be able to navigate a third way in worship renewal (as opposed to either traditional or contemporary). Defining a vision that includes the best of a broad spectrum of worship expression is a very do-able objective. These hymns that Andrew mentions are a part of this vision.

GORD MCCROSTIE, ON OUR WEBSITE

**Andrew Donaldson replies:** It's taken me awhile to realize that there isn't a name for this "third way" because it isn't a genre, a style or even a repertoire. I'm not even sure you can call it "ancient/future" because we don't know what ancient music sounded like, and we can't really sing the future. But, like you, I believe balancing musical traditions is possible. If we can't literally sing the song of the whole church, I think we can sing much more of it than we sometimes (often?) do. ■

#### online extra

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** AS ALWAYS, LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA).



# Am I Just I?

THINKING ALOUD ON THE YEAR THAT WAS. BY ANDREW FAIZ

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.  
Oh Lord, why have you forsaken me?**

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.**  
Change is the only constant in life.  
God is in His Heavens.  
I don't know how to bring  
these two thoughts together.  
Am I just I?

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.**  
I am bobbing in my own guilt  
and regret.  
Both relationships were  
complicated—they always are.  
They have to be.  
Was I a good son?  
Or good enough?  
A good parishioner?  
Could I have done more?  
Yes, of course. Of course  
I could have done more.  
It was what it was.  
What does that mean?  
Why in this trauma am I conjouring  
inane utterances?

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.**  
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not  
want. He maketh me to lie down in  
green pastures: He leadeth me beside  
the still waters. He restoreth my soul:  
He leadeth me in the paths of right-  
eousness for His name's sake. Yea,  
though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy  
staff they comfort me.

I "know" this. But I don't always  
"feel" it.

And why does my brain immedi-  
ately go to the KJV?



WHAT A YEAR.  
MY MOTHER DIED.  
MY CHURCH OF  
40 YEARS CLOSED

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.**  
I am tired as I write this—tired because  
this past weekend we celebrated our  
daughter's ninth birthday with six of her  
friends for a sleepover. They giggled and  
laughed and had little meltdowns and  
laughed some more and sang, boy did  
they sing, for 18 hours, barely sleeping  
because there was so much living to do.

They laughed so openly, so freely.  
They laughed as if there was no sadness  
in the world. They laughed because  
that moment, that very moment, was  
rich with things to laugh about.

I must learn this. Though I must  
have known it, perhaps when I was  
nine, and have since forgotten it. I just  
don't have a memory of ever laughing  
or singing that much.

**What a year. My mother died.  
My church of 40 years closed.**  
As you read this, Advent has begun.  
The countdown—Christ is born.

Rebirth in the midst of winter.  
Even though I hate the noise of the  
Christmas season—and this year I fear  
it even more—I love the stillness of

Christ's mass itself.

The presents—I hate the presents,  
the mounds of wasted cash shoved  
under a tree, itself laden with testaments  
to sentimentality and banality—mock  
the inverse story. "The little stranger,"  
to quote one of my favourite songs, in  
a manger, a scared young woman his  
mother, a handyman his father.

Osvaldo, who also died this year,  
came to our house everyday for three  
years. He could paint, do drywall, elec-  
trical, plumbing. A five-foot-nothing  
Portuguese man in his sixties, he reno-  
vated, built, developed, modernized,  
prettified our house. He brought little  
treats for our daughter.

Now when I think of Joseph, I think  
of Osvaldo. (It helps that both their  
wives have the same name.) A simple  
man, not famous or rich or the bearer  
of titles, not well equipped to be at  
the centre of history, a craftsman who  
could perform little tricks with wood.

Through Osvaldo's skill came this  
mansion in which I live. Through the  
manger came the salvation I take for  
granted. Through Christ comes the  
strength I forget I have.

And the peace my selfishness  
craves.

Sure it was a tough year; but Joseph's  
baby boy has built my mother a private  
mansion. She's happy. No longer in  
pain. And in the name of Christ, my  
church is vital again as a mission.

I must learn this wisdom. I know it,  
but often forget it.

*"In a dream I heard a voice saying  
'Fear not, come rejoice  
It's the end of the beginning,  
praise the newborn king.'"* ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's  
managing editor.



## A Shift in the Wind

WHERE IS THE LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY TAKING US? BY HANS KOUWENBERG

I WONDER if I am the only one, or if other Presbyterians are fully aware of the gradual shift that is being made in the resource people and support services that are being made available to us by the Life and Mission Agency, a shift that threatens to be so dramatic that it will refocus the entire ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada?

Ever since the boards of Congregational Life, World Mission and Ministry were replaced by the Life and Mission Agency in a wholesale restructuring of national support services in the early 1990s, there has been a gradual collapse of people and services available to the local church to support local congregational development, Christian formation and education, and worship and evangelism.

A couple of years ago, the two positions of associate secretaries in the areas of Christian education and worship/evangelism were merged into one position of associate secretary for the Vine; this was a new office, augmented with some gifted volunteers, which promised to take care of most requests for

help in finding resources for most of the above concerns. After the first secretary moved on, a new and very capable secretary was appointed just this year. But there were fewer trained, skilled and experienced personnel available in the field.

Now we are told the associate secretary position for Canada Ministries will also be merged (upon the retirement of the incumbent next year) with the Vine into a new, yet unnamed position that will include the concerns for which the Vine previously offered leadership.

Meanwhile, the associate secretary positions for Ministry and Church Vocations, Communications, Justice Ministries, with its added emphasis on healing and reconciliation with our aboriginal neighbours, International Ministries, Stewardship, Planned Giving, and Presbyterian World Service and Development will remain.

True, we are promised "top-notch" staff for the new and improved "church resources" position, but the fact remains: there will be fewer and fewer boots on the ground to offer

**The fact remains:  
there will be fewer  
and fewer boots on  
the ground to offer  
local presbyteries  
and congregations  
the leadership and  
resources needed**

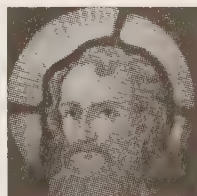
local presbyteries and congregations the leadership and resources needed to deal with the challenges of being the church in the 21st century.

This is happening even as regional synod support staff, who used to pick up some of the slack in these areas, are also being cut back or eliminated entirely because of reduced financial resources.

Who will assist the Life and Mission Agency in thinking about and planning for any meaningful national church advancement or development? Who will meet with our presbyteries and congregations to jointly assess where our dwindling resources might best be placed in assisting declining ministries or starting new ones? Who will help local congregations consider any and all of the essential services that may affect their church health (or lack of it), and suggest the best resources available for them to move to better or new levels of faithful work and witness?

While one can sympathize with the need to prune our resources according to actual financial realities, and one can give national leaders credit for doing the

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## Change is Common at Church Offices

The reconfiguration process at national offices began in the 1980s; the merger of the boards of Congregational Life, Ministry and World Mission to create the Life and Mission Agency and Support Services was approved at General Assembly in 1990 and implemented between 1990 and 1992. It was intended to create a "leaner" system with "clear lines of demarcation" between the work of offices and staff, and also intended a reduction in the number of staff.

The proposed restructuring plan included recommendations for the development of "staff teams at the synod level" and suggested that some responsibilities from the national level, especially those "related to education/nurture and mission programs" be moved to the synod or regional level so that "the result will be delivery of support services closer to the congregations." There are currently 15 regional staff funded by the LMA and the Women's Missionary Society and employed by the church's eight synods. A \$200,000 cut from the WMS's yearly funding for regional staff came into effect in 2010.

In 2008 a new department, the Vine, incorporated four offices—Worship, Evangelism and Church Growth, Education for the Faith, and Ministry with Children and Youth—which were previously run by two associate secretaries. As part of the change, the two positions were replaced with a single team leader.

Effective January, the Vine and Canada Ministries will merge to create a single department headed by one associate secretary. —C. Purvis

best they can in making difficult choices, it remains to be seen how effectively this latest reorganization (and cutback) of staff will actually help the delivery of critically needed, effective service to local presbyteries and congregations.

Further, I wonder whether this shift in focus—with more and more of our resources remaining now dedicated to supporting national social justice initiatives and/or to building up Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D—will point the church in the direction it needs to go in these challenging years before us.

Some of us, at least, would say that

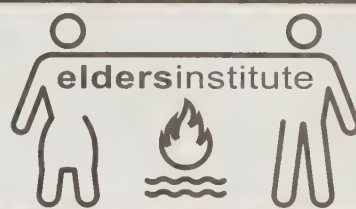
to pay less and less attention to the hand that feeds you, and to building up its resources, is really counter-productive. For after all, the only church is the local church, established and built up in Jesus Christ; the so-called "national church" only exists because enough local congregations wish to continue banding together and supporting each other in ministry and mission. When essential support for these local congregations dwindles and dies, support for Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D may also die.

I know the Life and Mission Agency has consulted among its membership and with the Assembly Council in

making these decisions, and these include my friends, but are they aware of the direction in which these moves are taking us? Perhaps they are, but are we content with these decisions? ■

*Rev. Hans Kouwenberg is pastor at Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C., and a former moderator of the General Assembly.*

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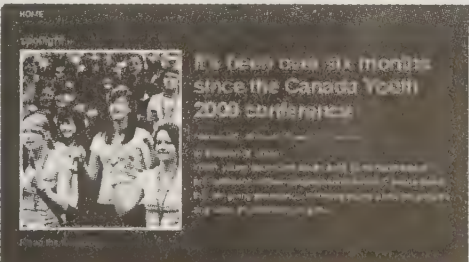
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# Community News



A woman walks around the toxic mess left after a disaster in Hungary.

## Responding in Hungary

MORE THAN 550 families in the villages of Kolontar and Devecser are affected by toxic red sludge that burst from a nearby alumina plant reservoir in October. Nine people were killed, either by the flood itself or as a result of severe burns from the highly basic sludge. The flood caused 38 homes to collapse, covered the rest with red mud, and has damaged water sources. Nearly 200 homes have had to be demolished.

Neither of the Presbyterian Church's missionaries were affected, though David Pandy-Szekeres, who lives with

his family in Hungary, is following developments and told the *Record* the tragedy is being called "the largest industrial and ecological disaster that has ever hit Hungary."

Presbyterian World Service and Development is supporting Hungarian Reformed Aid, the development arm of a long-standing

partner, the Hungarian Reformed Church.

Volunteers are providing food items for the evacuated families, blankets, pillows and clothes for a public shelter, cleaning supplies, masks and coveralls for volunteer clean-up crews, and shelter for up to 200 people for six months in the heated holiday camps of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

Hungarian churches in the Presbytery of Westminster have launched a campaign to raise funds for those most affected. Presbyterians can help by making an online donation through PWS&D, or visit the Help Hungary Now website at [helphungarynow.wordpress.com](http://helphungarynow.wordpress.com)

for the latest information. —PWS&D and AM

## Did You Fast for Change?

CANADIAN Foodgrains Bank is inviting Canadians to share their experiences with Fast for Change, which happened on World Food Day, Oct. 16. Stories will be shared on the Fast for Change website and possibly with fellow participants. Email James Kornelsen, CFGB's public engagement coordinator, at [j\\_kornelsen@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:j_kornelsen@foodgrainsbank.ca) to let him know how you, your family, congregation or group fasted for change, and how this experience was significant. Include your name, church or group, and location.

This year Fast for Change focused on food production and called everyone into a deeper relationship with God, the earth, and communities. The initiative offers resource materials to help learn about and reflect on food justice issues, and gives Canadians an opportunity to "stand in solidarity with hungry people."

CFGB works to end hunger in

**Wishing a blessed Advent  
season to you and yours  
from the staff of the  
Life and Mission Agency  
[presbyterian.ca/advent](http://presbyterian.ca/advent)**





developing countries, and is supported by the Presbyterian Church. Visit [fastforchange.ca](http://fastforchange.ca) for more information.

—AM

### New Kids' Book Tackles Truth

MUST A STORY have happened to be true? It's a question faced by adults and children alike, says Dr. Laura Alary, who made it the subject of a newly-published children's book aptly entitled, *Is That Story True?*

"I believe it's good to begin conversations about truth and meaning with children, because they are still so open to the power of stories to affect them in deep and real ways," said the theologically-educated mother of three.

As a student and teacher of the Bible, Alary found herself mediating heated discussions about whether or not something in scripture—such as the creation story in Genesis—happened historically. The experience formed the basis for her book's simple narrative, in which a girl named Maggie reads stories with her mother and asks if each is true. But she discovers that stories can be true in more than a literal sense.

Alary is a member of Guildwood Community in Scarborough, Ont.,

where her husband, Rev. Hugh Donnelly serves as minister.

*Is That Story True?* is available through the WMS Book Room or the website of Wood Lake Publishing, [woodlakebooks.com](http://woodlakebooks.com).  
—C.Purvis

### Praying for the Maple Leafs

WHEN THE Toronto Maple Leafs won their first two games of the season in early October, a correspondent for the satirical television show *22 Minutes* sought out "one of God's spokespeople" to discover whether or not the team had a prayer of making the playoffs.

"Prayer is good," said Rev. Will Ingram, minister at St. Andrew's in downtown Toronto, who was featured in the short spoof. "I'm all in favour of prayer. But when it comes to hockey, scoring goals can be more effective than prayer."

The segment was broadcast on Oct. 12, and is archived at [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca).



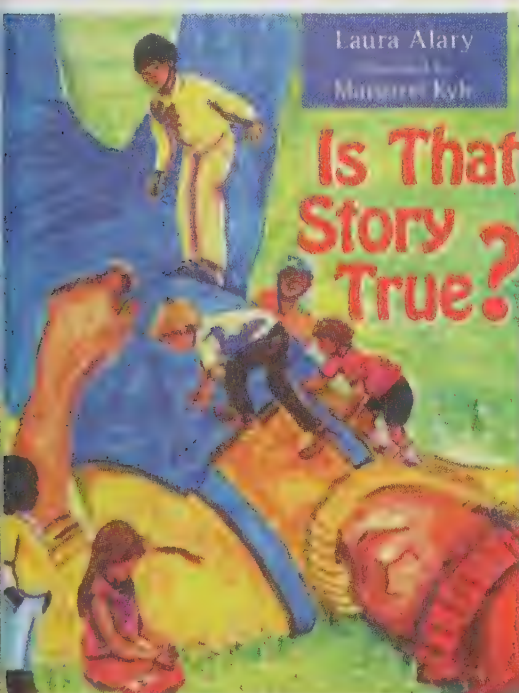
Rev. Will Ingram on CBC's *22 Minutes*.

### Work Continues on AIDS Day

DEC. 1 IS WORLD AIDS DAY; a day when many reflect on the ongoing fight against HIV and AIDS.

Working through the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Presbyterian Church joined churches around the world to encourage governments to meet their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and to fund the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which, among other things, provides funds for AIDS drugs to PCC partner hospitals in Malawi and India. After governments renewed ➤

SCREEN SHOT COURTESY OF CBC



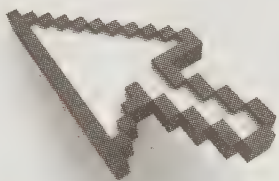
Canadian Presbyterian launches a new book about "truth."

### Atlantic Presbyteries Look to Future

FORTY PEOPLE from five of the six Atlantic presbyteries gathered in October to grapple with the changing context of ministry and mission in the 21st century. Beginning with a presentation from the Halifax and Lunenburg Emmaus project team and concluding with resource people who attended the church's Congregations in Transition event about a year ago, participants engaged in a whirlwind of conversations ranging from what ministry was in the second half of the 20th century with Dr. John Cameron, to what ministry might be in the future, with Brad Blaikie.

With an understanding that much of the answer lies within individual churches and presbyteries, participants took part in panel discussions, workshops with Dr. Ellen MacLean (who spoke on rural life and ministry, with a focus on women) and Steven Webb (who also spoke on rural ministry but with a focus on the church engaged in development issues), and group discussions on creating a climate for hospital and home visiting, being part of your church and community, and creating a future vision for rural ministry. The various parts of the program were brought together with the wonderful insights of the event storyteller, Barb Fotheringham. The conference was held in Nova Scotia, at both Thorburn Union Church and Camp Geddie. —Kenn Stright



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**The Healing Continues**

A HEALING and reconciliation event was held at the Squamish First Nation, North Vancouver, B.C., in October to help educate non-aboriginal people. The Presbyterian Church provided a grant, and Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, attended, while Rev. Ian Morrison, retired general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, spoke as one of five Canadian church representatives.

"It provided an opportunity—that I would hope is repeated in one form or another in many communities—for the non-aboriginal community to hear directly from leaders, elders and survivors in the aboriginal community about the impact of residential schools in the context of how we can move forward together toward reconciliation," Kendall told the *Record*.

Several aboriginal representatives pointed to relationships that have been developing between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people that were both challenging and held hope for the future. —AM



their commitments to the MDGs last September, pledges for the global fund made in October fell \$2 billion short of what is needed to continue current treatments.

Over half of those currently on treatment receive it through services funded by the global fund. A June study commissioned by the EAA showed that faith-based organizations providing AIDS services were already experiencing reduced funding—a significant trend when taken with previous data showing that faith-based organizations provide up to 70 per cent of health care in rural and poorly resourced areas. The majority of organizations in the study indicated they could not add new patients to treatment regimes.

Now the EAA is helping churches and faith-based organizations work together to prepare for the UN's special session on HIV and AIDS in June 2011, where they hope to convince governments of the need to live up to their commitments.

"With the support of Canadian Presbyterians we are helping our partners equip communities to respond, from caring for orphans and vulnerable children to preventing the spread of HIV to fighting stigma and discrimi-

nation," said Susan James, Presbyterian World Service and Development program coordinator for Africa.

Worship resources for use around World AIDS Day are available at [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca). —Karen Plater, associate secretary for Stewardship at the PCC, and vice-chair of the EAA's HIV and AIDS strategy group

**Another Milestone at Wynford**

Gladys Stover, administrative assistant in the Life and Mission Agency's International Ministries department, celebrated 20 years of work with the Presbyterian Church in Canada on Oct. 29. A small reception was held at church offices, and Ron Wallace, associate secretary for International Ministries, presented Stover with a thank-you bouquet.

**Presbyterian Elected in K-W**

In a landslide victory, Presbyterian Margaret Johnston was elected public school trustee in Kitchener, Ont., in October.

"My Knox, Waterloo, family has been so supportive during my run for school board," she told the *Record*.

Johnston runs the church's weekly LOGOS program for youth. ■



# World News

## Canadian Court on Face Veils

A CANADIAN court has urged compromise when considering whether Muslim women should be allowed to wear veils while testifying in court.

The Court of Appeal in the province of Ontario was considering a Toronto case involving an alleged sexual assault victim, identified only as N.S., who wished to wear her niqab—a face veil with a slit for the eyes—while testifying at a preliminary hearing against two men accused of assaulting her.

While the appeal court ordered a lower court judge to reconsider his 2008 ruling ordering the woman to reveal her face while testifying, it resisted setting a rule for all cases.

Instead, the three-judge panel noted that, "The effect of wearing the niqab will vary from case to case." In their unanimous decision, the judges laid out a framework for lower court judges to balance the rights of a defendant to see the face of a witness, against the religious freedoms of alleged crime victims.

Suggestions include using an all-female court or requiring a witness to wear a thinner niqab that better allows the court to "assess her demeanour." The judges added, however, "If, in the specific circumstances, the accused's fair trial right can be honoured only by requiring the witness to remove the niqab, the niqab must be removed if the witness is to testify."

A judge presiding at the 2008 preliminary hearing of N.S.'s cousin and uncle, who are accused of assaulting her, ordered her to unveil while testifying.

The woman, who had worn a niqab for five years, asked the province's Superior Court to overturn the ruling. That court affirmed the judge's jurisdiction to order the woman to unveil but suggested similar cases be decided on an individual basis. —ENI

## Sudan Could Become Another Rwanda

A FORMER general secretary of the World Council of Churches has warned that tension in Sudan ahead of a plebiscite on independence for the south of Africa's biggest country could spark mass killings similar to the Rwanda genocide in 1994.

"We know it is possible these people could easily be massacred, if Khartoum is not happy with how the referendum will go," said Rev. Samuel Kobia, an ecumenical envoy from the All Africa Conference of Churches. "We also wanted to sound a warning, that a situation is brewing up that could lead to another Rwanda and we don't want the international community to say, 'We didn't know' ... As churches, we will hold the international community accountable for

what happens."

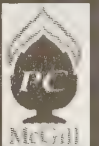
Kobia, a Kenyan Methodist, led the Geneva-based WCC from 2004 to 2009.

On Jan. 9, referenda are scheduled in southern Sudan and the oil-rich Abyei border region between the north and south. The result could see people from the south, where Christianity and traditional >



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religions predominate, flee from the north, where most people are Arabs and Islam is dominant. The Abyei region will be choosing whether to join the north or south of the existing country. The referendum is part of a 2005 comprehensive peace agreement that sealed the end of a 21-year-long civil war between north and south in which more than two million people died.

"I thought up to 95 per cent would vote to secede. I want to revise that number upwards and say up to 98 per cent or more," said Kobia. "For the people of southern Sudan, voting for unity would mean voting to remain second-class citizens in their

own country."

Kobia said there are between a half million and 2.5 million southern Sudanese estimated to be living in the north. He noted reports that Sudan's

## More 'Grey Hair in Pews,' Survey Says

THERE IS "more grey hair in Presbyterian pews today" than there was seven years ago according to a survey of over 40,000 American Presbyterians and more than 500 churches across the U.S.

A benchmark survey conducted in 2001 found the median age of American Presbyterians to be 58. By 2008, the median age had crept up to 61, with 43 per cent reporting they were over the age of 65 and almost 80 per cent over age 45.

Of those surveyed, most who recently joined a PC(USA) congregation had previously been affiliated with another church or denomination, with relatively few "unchurched" people in the pews.

The report was conducted by the PC(USA)'s Office of Research Services.  
—with files from the PC(USA) and Presbyterian Outlook

minister of information in Khartoum had warned that southerners living in the north will not have any citizenship rights if their kinsfolk vote for separation. —ENI ■

# The Other Six Days Christian Music is Changing

TEN ARTISTS YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE BUT SHOULD KNOW. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

**1. PHIL WICKHAM** What do you get when two band members from a popular 1960's Christian hippie movement get married? Phil Wickham, that's what! Good acoustic soft pop-rock.

**FIND IT @** [philwickham.com](http://philwickham.com)

**2. SKILLET** I love it when rock stars mingle with the symphony and Skillet does just that. This is a great industrial metal band with two Grammy nominations. Don't be surprised to hear heavily distorted guitars with some violins added for good measure. **FIND IT @** [skillet.com/awake.php](http://skillet.com/awake.php)

**3. JJ HELLER** With absolutely beautiful poetry and a voice to match, JJ Heller creates music as thoughtful as it is relaxing. She reminds me a bit of late 90's star, Fiona Apple.

**FIND IT @** [jjheller.com](http://jjheller.com)

**4. LECRAE** While I've never been much of a fan of rap, there is simply no denying the lyrical talent in Lecrae. Proof that rap music need not be offensive.

**FIND IT @** [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), search "Lecrae"

**5. CASTING CROWNS** If your church does contemporary music, then these guys probably need no introduction. It's a good mix between the kind of music you might actually hear on the radio and the church music we hear on Sundays.

**FIND IT @** [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), search "Casting Crowns"

**6. SWITCHFOOT** Maybe it's just my 90's grunge roots showing, but this alternative rock band does a great mix of music. This guitar-heavy band has especially clever lyrics, with both punk and jazz influences. **FIND IT @** [switchfoot.com](http://switchfoot.com)

**7. JEREMY CAMP** Contemporary Christian music fitting for your worship service or just for driving down the road, Jeremy Camp is kind of akin to the Jack Johnson of Christian music.

**FIND IT @** [jeremycamp.com/home.html](http://jeremycamp.com/home.html)

**8. FIREFLIGHT** Gothic-metal, Christian and female, this vocally driven band is reminiscent of another great Christian band, Flyleaf as well as mainstream artist, Evanescence. Think: Christian vampire. **FIND IT @** [fireflightrock.com](http://fireflightrock.com)

**9. TOBYMAC** Originally from the Grammy-award winning 90's group DC Talk, Toby Mac has been out on his own for a while now. Though perhaps a tad hokey when you think about a 45-year-old white Christian rapper, he still makes some great music. **FIND IT @** [tobymac.com](http://tobymac.com)

**10. MATTHEW WEST** Mellow pop/country-rock sound out of Nashville. It's worth noting that West has written music for secular artists, including Rascal Flatts.

**FIND IT @** [matthewwest.com](http://matthewwest.com) ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.



# Travel and See

A YOUNG MISSIONARY HEADS TO MALAWI. BY STEPHANIE MCDONALD

WHILE LIVING IN GHANA, Africa, as an exchange student, I became fascinated with the phrases painted onto tro-tros, those large vans that shuttle people around cities and throughout the country. The words sometimes offer praise, "Clap for Jesus," or reveal an owner's philosophical side, "What is written." One of these sayings—"Travel and See"—has seared itself onto my mind. It's a simple but poignant message. For me it is a call to travel to a place that may be unfamiliar, to ask questions, to talk with, and to live among the people there. And then, perhaps, a little more understanding of what life is like for people elsewhere will be gained.

It is this philosophy that I will carry with me as I begin my placement as a project management intern with the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission in Malawi.

I write this days before I check in at Pearson International Airport and begin the journey to Blantyre, which will be home for the next eight months. Amidst packing and saying goodbyes, I have moments of feeling overwhelmed. While living in Africa will not be new for me, I have never lived in Malawi or in a place that faces the same stark realities as this small central African country does. Will there be a role for me to play? Will I be able to adequately communicate the work I will be doing and the issues I will be seeing?

Working as a young adult intern with the Presbyterian Church feels like the culmination of many experiences in my life. I grew up in a household and in a church community that encouraged me to think beyond our municipal and national borders and to work in service of others. It therefore felt like a natural fit to major in international develop-



Left: The author in a shop in Ghana; right: A Ghanaian tro-tro.

ment studies at university.

While at Trent University I spent a year in Ghana, attending the University of Legon in Accra and working for a non-governmental organization. The NGO focused on food security, encouraging farmers to grow and consume soybeans.

After university I landed in Iqaluit, Nunavut, physically far from the places I had studied, but to my initial surprise, not immune to the same economic and social hardships. Most recently I worked for the Inuit government, helping to create an online database of Inuit-specific health data—statistics that up to now have been unavailable or difficult to find. It is a sad reality that Canada's arctic inhabitants have some of the worst health indicators in the country, and sometimes the world. Social ills plague communities and trauma is passed down through the generations. By making it available, health data can be used to raise awareness and as a powerful advocacy tool.

At the beginning of this year, the opportunity to interview for a young adult internship position presented itself. After four years in the north, I

was ready for a change. As the cold, dark Iqaluit winter dragged on, I began dreaming of the heat and energy of Africa, of that feeling of happiness I have when I am there. Fast forward to the present and I have a renewed passport, eight months' worth of anti-malarials, a stack of books and the hope that I'll find other readers in Blantyre willing to swap with me, and the sum of my material possessions packed into containers in storage.

In my moments of both excitement and uncertainty I think of the support and prayers from my family and friends, of my home congregation, Glencoe Presbyterian, Ont., and of the wider Presbyterian Church. I feel blessed to be representing a church that always taught me to look outward and serve others. And as I settle into my new life and try to bring meaning to what I'm seeing and hearing, I will remember the words on that Ghanaian tro-tro, "Travel and See." ■

*Stephanie McDonald's internship is with PCC partner, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.*



## Letter from India

# Something Good is Going On

CHURCH SUPPORT IS HAVING AN IMPACT. BY GUY SMAGGHE

WE ARE OFF TO RATLAM, 140 kilometres from Indore, India, where we landed yesterday. Our new Presbyterian World Service and Development committee member, Rev. Laura Kavanagh from Victoria, joined me for this monitoring visit. The road is long and narrow, but the driver is alert, manoeuvring around goats, pedestrians, cows, and a bus that went into the ditch a few hours ago. I am continually struck by the contrasts around me. An ox cart comes by, loaded with hay, just like I pictured it in the middle ages (thanks to the comic books I read growing up!) We zoom by talking on our cell phones to make sure that all plans are on track. I make a call to our government officer at CIDA in Gatineau, Que., to clarify a few questions regarding the new five-year program proposal we just submitted. We drive by a herd of camels.



Guy Smagghe in India.

To save time, we opted for a packed lunch instead of a restaurant. The car pulls over under a tree along the road, our makeshift picnic area. As crowded as some places are in India, it is amazing how deserted others are. We have lunch in what seems to be the middle of nowhere. Chicken biryani, a classic.

Upon reaching our first destination near Ratlam, villagers are expecting us

under a canopy set up for the occasion. They greet us with the flame and fumes of burning camphor, reserved for special guests. It is a rare occurrence here to receive overseas guests.

After introductions with local leaders and the team of community health volunteers, they share with us their stories of change: how their village has progressed since the community health volunteers started their work with the support of PWS&D. Health teachings are happening in schools, and children have acquired better hygiene habits. Vaccination campaigns were carried out. Government officials are paying attention to the area and are helping to provide access to programs that are digging water wells for irrigation, ponds for fish farming, and exposure tours to demonstration farms.

My challenge is to try to absorb the complexities of where I am, what the daily realities and lives of the people in front of me are, and particularly how our project fits into those realities and whether or not it has made a positive difference in the community. We witness the diversification of crops in gardens, with vegetables of all kinds growing next to corn fields: large cucumbers, red hot peppers, 'lady fingers,' beans, groundnuts and tomatoes. We are taken to a fish pond where the fish swarm to get a share of some bread thrown in.

It all adds up to shaping healthier communities. The short duration of our visit increases the challenge, but the enthusiasm of the people lead us to believe that, indeed, something good is going on here. ■

*Guy Smagghe is senior program coordinator at PWS&D.*

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# Features

Progressive Lectionary



Alan Wybrow, Knox, North Easthope, Ont.

## Joseph's Hands

THE WAY GOD WORKS TO REDEEM THE WORLD MAY NOT MAKE SENSE TO US. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

December 19, 2010 reading:

4th Sunday of Advent  
Matthew 1:18-25

### WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT JOSEPH!

He's a righteous man. He's a carpenter by trade. Don't think of a noble craftsman with a prosperous

shop. Think of a man with a satchel of primitive tools. Walking the roads. Looking for work. Swallowing his pride. Trying to forget his citizenship. Climbing the hill to work for the Romans in Sephoris. At least it's work. A man has to make a living. He's still a righteous man. At least he has that.

The same legends that make Mary a spinster of 16 make Joseph an old man. That's to explain his disappearance from the story early on. If he's

really an old man, not yet married, let's make him middle-aged. Maybe 21. If he's much older than that, he'll never marry. Maybe take a religious vow. Maybe die a beggar.

He's a righteous man. He's done well in his religion since becoming a man at 13. His elders approve of him. Maybe his poverty, and his dedication to daily labour and religion, have delayed his marriage. But marry he must. And Mary it will be. ➤





Dylan Langille, Dartmouth, N.S.

He's tired. His hands ache from a day of hard work. Splinters. Blisters. Sunburn. His hands ache from wringing. From beating his chest. What should a righteous man do? The elders are certain. He must distance himself from Mary right away. Let the law and the community see to her.

His good name is all he has. He must protect it. And he must guard his walk with God. There's no place for a sinner on his path. That will mean the end for Mary. At best she'll be banished from the community. If there's an ill wind in town she'll be stoned to death. Joseph will still be a righteous man.

He covers his face with his rough hands. They remind him of his precarious existence. What business does he have being engaged, betrothed, as good as married? How could he have made that deal with Mary's father, another righteous man?

Joseph sees through his fingers. A flicker of light. He'll go to Mary's father. He'll break the engagement quietly. Maybe the neighbours really don't know about Mary after all. Maybe some relative in another village will take her in. He's a righteous man. He will not hide behind the letter of the law. He'll do what's best for Mary. Others will think him a fool. He looks at his hands. At least he'll be a fool who knows how to work hard. Maybe in some other town.

He sleeps. It may just be

**Joseph sees through  
his fingers. A flicker  
of light. He'll go  
to Mary's father.  
He'll break the  
engagement quietly**

superstition, but sometimes things become clear in dream-time. We know what happens next. Righteous Joseph gets the right answer. Just not the one he expects. A dream. A visitor. A commission. A promise. A name. As it was for the prophets of old. Another partnership sealed. Another servant set apart and empowered.

For nine months in time, God leaves God's plan for the redemption of the world in the calloused hands of a simple, righteous young man. Thirty-nine weeks the fate of the universe resides in the heart of a bold and frightened girl. For years after, God leaves the fulfilment of that great plan to grow in a child. First held, then led, and taught by the righteous man with the rough red hands. Loved and feared by the woman with the divinely-enlarged, Spirit-singed heart.

This is the way God works to redeem the world. Through presence, not power. In partnership, not domination. Through small miracles and "big events." With Marys. And Josephs. And you and me. That may not make much sense to us. But it's enough to make the angels shout good news of great joy which shall be for all people.

"This Child will be Emmanuel,  
Not God upon a throne  
But God-with-us, Emmanuel,  
As close as blood and bone."  
—*The Hands That First Held Mary's  
Child, Book of Praise #158* ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives  
in Halifax.

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Jennifer D. Logan, St. Andrew's, Nanaimo, B.C.

# Gifts

GOD GIVES THEM. **BY CALVIN BROWN**

**W**hen we think of Christmas, we think of gifts. There are many kinds of gifts.

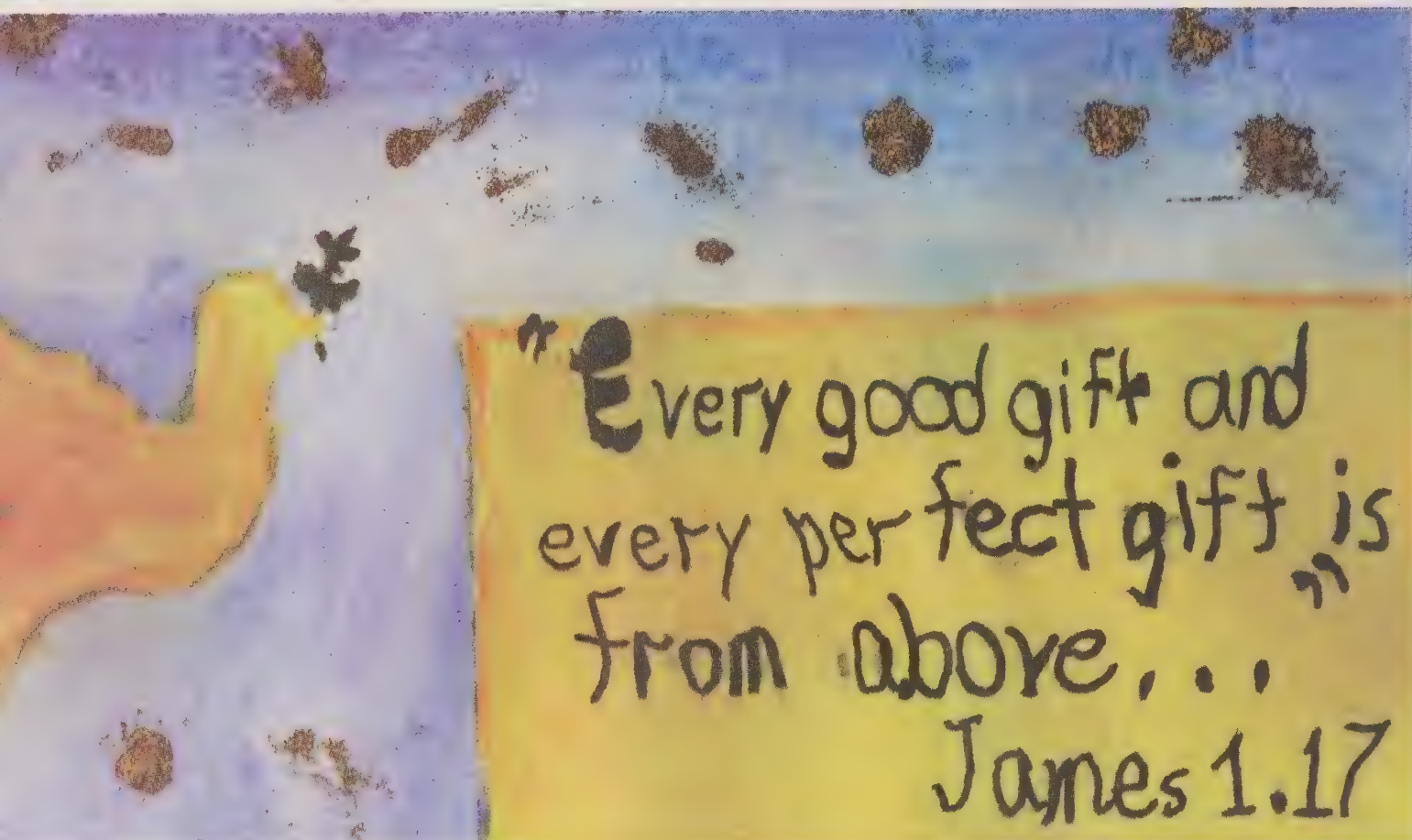
Most common is the exchange gift. Someone gives you a present and you make sure you return a gift of equal value. Much gift-giving at Christmas is of this kind. Theologically, this is like the person who has an unspoken deal with God that she will give her time

and money to the church but God must reciprocate by bringing blessings to her and her family. This was the gift-giving that the Pharisees and Sadducees seemed to practice through their sacrifices at the temple at the time Jesus was born. It wasn't the kind, however, that Jesus commended as gaining favour or building a real relationship with God.

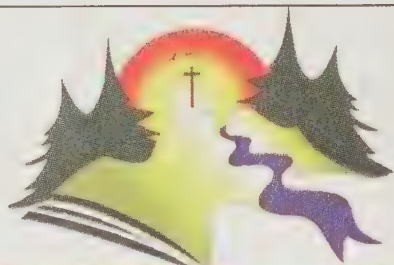
There is also the generous gift. That is when someone gives in such a way that it can't be reciprocated in kind since

the one who receives the gift doesn't have the means to do so. This is like the gift a parent gives to a child, knowing that what is given back will not be of the same material value. This is also like the gift God gave us that first Christmas with Christ sent into the world to save us. We simply don't have the capacity to repay God and so all we can offer is much less, but still given in a spirit of love and appreciation—just as a child gives a gift to a generous parent. ➤





Brian Kamau, 10, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



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There is also the gift of giving yourself. This can be a gift of time or a commitment of being present for someone. This is the greatest gift of all because it is the gift that carries within it unconditional love. This is the gift Jesus gave us in coming to be one of us and to commit his life for us. This is also the gift that Paul says we are to give in thanksgiving back to God. He writes to the Romans and speaks to us saying that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God, which is our reasonable worship. This gift is not principally about giving things—sometimes the giving of things is simply a way of substituting material pleasure in place of the joy of fellowship and belonging.

I love all the material things and blessings God gives me (God really is generous!) but the gift I most want is to sense God is with me in all that life brings. Paul, I know, felt the same way when he wrote: "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ... For I am convinced that neither death

nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither the height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:32,38-39)

What an amazing gift! St. John in his first letter focuses on this gift of fellowship as well. In fact he says, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete." (1 John 1:3-4.)

In this Advent-Christmas season, let us reflect on our gift-giving and on God's gift-giving. Let us imitate Jesus and become a gift to others by pointing them through our words and deeds and presence to the gift that is eternal—Jesus.

Joy to the World! ■

*Rev. Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC—[renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca](http://renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca).*





"Mary With Child" by Deana Weyman, 69, St. Andrew's, King City, Ont.

# This is My Beloved Son... And he is ill.

## WE'D KNOWN IT FOR SOME TIME.

Our beloved son is ill.

More ill than we realized at first; more ill than he realizes himself yet.

His illness affects his whole life ... and ours, too.

His illness affects the dreams and hopes our son had for his life—good friends and good success at school, a good job, a good life.

His illness affects the dreams and hopes we had for our son—success at school, graduations, a job, a future family of his own, a good relationship with us, his parents.

Our beloved son is ill.

Our beloved son is mentally ill.

Or better stated: Our beloved son has a mental illness. That's one of the problems, you see, with mental illness. We would never say, "My wife

is cancer," or "My brother is muscular dystrophy." But the mentally ill become defined by their disease. And their disease often defines how they are treated by others.

Our beloved son. We knew that something was wrong from his elementary school years. We tried many things: we worked with teachers and tutors, paid for supplemental learning courses, saw counsellors, got ►



## It has been a long journey, and the path is long and steep and rugged. The end is not in sight yet. But along the way, we have learned many things

our son involved in extra-curricular activities and our church youth group. We sent him to our church camp and larger youth events. But the problems persisted. Behaviour problems, like lying and stealing, difficulty with friendships, with "fitting in." Our son wasn't invited to birthday parties much; and as he grew older, the problems grew larger and more difficult. He struggled in school, and grew more angry at home. There was risky behaviour, running away, police at our door, violence in our home.

We read the best parenting books, attended courses and seminars, wept and prayed. We worried when he was at home; we worried when we didn't know where our son was, sometimes for days, sometimes for weeks. It broke our hearts to watch his broken spirit and sense of self. It broke our peace, with his wild ways of getting attention and his hurtful ways of getting back. Relationships with girls were always a challenge—it would start off well, grew serious far too quickly, and end more dramatically every time.

The community and the congregation we attended knew something was wrong. No doubt, there was talk going on about him, and about us. Some of that talk was,

I'm sure, judgmental; some of it compassionate and concerned. As the problems became more obvious and more public, people gradually stopped asking much about our son. That was easier to do as he lived at home less, and rarely attended church.

Our family's stress level increased; our other children suffered from the energy that we had to expend on their brother; our marriage felt the strain as we wondered what to do next, when the next episode would explode, what the short-term and long-term future would hold for the son we love. My wife and I are Christians; we believed God had entrusted this son to our care, the precious son we had held in our arms as a newborn babe, the infant son we gave to the Lord at baptism, the son we had waited for and prayed over. We brought our boy to church week by week; we prayed at home, read the Bible as a family at suppertimes, made sure he had everything, including loving parents and a good home.

For years we carried a heavy burden of guilt—that somehow, our son's struggles were our fault. That we had made too many mistakes, had not parented the right way—had been too strict or too lenient, too Christian or

not faithful enough. We asked "Why?" many times—asked our son, asked ourselves, asked God.

It has been a long journey, and the path is long and steep and rugged. The end is not in sight yet. But along the way, we have learned many things. Perhaps some of what our family has learned will help our churches learn about mental illness—because those who suffer from this disease need to find the acceptance and support of a faith community too.

We likely don't realize that present in our pews or chairs on Sunday mornings are people who themselves struggle with mental illness: those who have depression or bipolar disorder, and who do their best to hide their illness because of the stigma attached. They hear the jokes about "crazy people" and "being off your meds" and so don't feel safe in sharing their truth. In your congregation there may be a wife whose husband never comes to church or church events because he's self-medicating his obsessive-compulsive disorder with alcohol. She would like to come to choir or attend the women's luncheon, but things at home sap her energy, and Sunday mornings are about the only time she can slip away. She doesn't have a marriage partner to bring to the couples' retreat; she has a dependant to care for, and aches for his loss and her own.

The other truth, of course, is that absent from our pews or chairs are those with mental illness, and their families. They don't feel they could fit in, measure up, or cope with the service or the fellowship potluck. People are often afraid of those with a mental illness, afraid of what they might do or say; people, good caring people, are often at a loss for words when talking with someone who has a mental illness or has a loved one who suffers



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from this devastating disease. Most have a greater comfort level with other debilitating illnesses, whether Parkinson's disease or melanoma. Mental illness is a strange world, a frightening place, and people don't know what to say or do.

Our family has heard this silence ... we know what it is to be brushed off by others, including church folk, who don't know what to say or do ... or who simply don't want to know, and found it easier to teach the Sunday school class or lead the youth group when our son was not involved. We understand. But it still hurts.

My wife and I didn't know what to say or do either. But because mental illness became part of our family experience, we have learned.

We have learned that mental illness is a brain disorder, not a character flaw, not the result of bad parenting or lack of effort on the part of the mentally ill person. Yes, even Christians can have a mental illness, and can still seek to be faithful, to have a relationship with God, and find wholeness in their lives.

We have learned that diagnosis of a mental illness is usually a long process. An accurate diagnosis may take a decade or more to obtain; proper medical and pharmaceutical help longer still, as the waiting list for mental health care professionals is long, the treatment takes time and persistence and can be very costly. If a disability pension is warranted, that too can take a long time, endless paperwork, interviews, and phone calls, all in the effort to receive a small monthly cheque that would leave our son very little to live on.

We have learned that we are not alone, and that support groups like those offered by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill offer both help and hope for families like ours.

We have learned how to advocate for our son, how to support him and stay focused on achievable goals and be thankful for good days.

We have learned that it's okay for people to ask about our son; to ask how

he is and how we are. We can choose how much to share, and appreciate the care shown when people ask. Our son is ill, he is not a monster.

We have learned that to help our son, we also need to care for ourselves, our marriage and our family. Sometimes that means making hard choices about where our son lives and how he is incorporated into our home life.

We have learned that there is hope; that those with a mental illness can live productive, helpful, meaningful lives and make wonderful contributions to family and society—and yes, even the church.

We have learned how important a caring congregation can be; that prayer support and yes, even a casserole at the door or a gift certificate to go out for a meal is a welcome help during stressful times.

We have learned that grieving is important—to grieve what our son has lost and may yet lose, in relationships and experiences and milestones and success. We also need to grieve what we have lost and may well yet lose—that our son may never hold down a good job, support a family, bring grandchildren to visit us, advocate for us when we're in the hospital or nursing home, be able or available to participate in our funeral service. That our other children may face bearing burdens for their brother in the years ahead saddens us now.

We have learned about being more compassionate and less judgmental, and about being sensitive as folks share their excitement and joy over successful children and wonderful marriages and happy families. We have a great



"Three Kings of Orient" by Deana Weyman, 69, St. Andrew's, King City, Ont.

deal of empathy for other wounded ones who listen to these good stories and have nothing to add—because their daughter has had another episode, their marriage is struggling, their family is fractured.

We have learned that God is big enough to love our son as he is, and to love us as we are, and to walk with us through the valleys of dark shadows, when the pastures are not green and the waters are not quiet.

Yes, our son is ill. He is our beloved son, and we have learned that our love for him is only a taste, a glimpse, of our Lord's love for us and all His children. ■

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*The author, a member of our denomination, has requested anonymity for reasons which include those mentioned in this article. It is not the policy of this magazine to publish anonymous articles, but we have verified the author's story and feel it is an important one to share.*



# Doing It Themselves

A STORY OF LOSS, HOPE AND REBIRTH. BY GINA SIKKEMA

West Huntington, Ont., is a tiny country church located along Highway 62 in the heart of Hastings County farming country. At 128 years of age, it's one of a small group of country churches remaining in the region. We don't have running water—there is none on the property. Our toilet is a composting one and the furnace only runs on Sundays, or Saturday night and Sunday when it's really cold. Electric ranges boil the dishwater. The stained glass window at the back of the church traces beautiful colours on the pews and floor and the old bell in the tower rings out joyfully every Sunday morning. What we lack in quantity, we make up in quality as our voices blend to raise the hymns to heaven.

Traditionally, country churches do not have a long list of names on the roll, but our numbers were exceptionally low. Something had to be done—choices had to be made. Over the years we've had our share of tiffs and disagreements, but the last one tore us apart, and that shouldn't happen among God's people. We have lost faithful lifetime members and weakened a good relationship with a sister church.

But, God has a plan for us. With His blessing, we rise again. We are tiny, but tough. The remaining small group has pulled together to rebuild out of the ashes of ruin. For the present we cannot afford a minister, so we enjoy the sermons delivered by retired and lay ministers who are happy to share the word of God. One congregant is presently training through Knox College's online lay ministry program. She takes her turn in the pulpit one Sunday each month.

We needed money—it was essential that we build up depleted reserves.

We immediately invited our neighbours for a spring gospel concert and Christmas program. The church was full. We invited friends, neighbours and church "alumni" to our anniversary in June. The church was packed. Both are annual events now.

We've dared to think outside the box—we tried a walkathon around a country block. That turned out to be more than 10 kilometres. Pictures tell the tale of sore feet and blisters but we were well supported! In fact it has become a biennial event.

After several years of nothing, we once again had a successful spring bake and yard sale. The people kept on coming and they loved our baking; they took away our treasures. At the end of the day, we took the few things that remained to the firefighters' yard sale down the highway. The community expects it now—homemade goodies are gratefully purchased by busy farm wives and working country urbanites.

At Christmastime, 11 members braved the cold to serenade the widowed and lonely with Christmas carols under the stars. It wasn't a fundraiser. It was our gift to the community. Because of the cold we had not planned to make a lot of stops, but neighbours sent us to other neighbours because they knew the music would be appreciated. We went, and it was.

Birthday Sunday continues on the first Sunday of each month, with cake and coffee and a lusty rendition of *Happy Birthday*. On the third Sunday in the month, we enjoy "Toonie Sunday," again with coffee and goodies and a good, old-fashioned visit over coffee and dishes. Twice a year we get together for a morning to give the church a good housecleaning and necessary small repairs. Large repairs are ongoing. All

of these things work well to bring us together and build community spirit.

We have a full session of five elders. They attend every meeting. Our roll has grown by five adherents and one new member. On Tuesday evenings we meet in a home for Bible study. The group has been together for more than 12 years and we learn many things from each other. The studies on angels and Revelations left us aware of how little we really know, and how much we want to learn. We are presently delighting in the revelation of scripture as we study *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn. Plans to hold Bible study at the church and to invite neighbours are underway.

Throughout the month we bring in donations of food which are picked up on the third Sunday and delivered to People Helping People, a community sharing and help program. The child we sponsored in Romania, through World Vision, no longer needs our support and we have received the name of a new child we will sponsor. We've filled many shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse and have purchased chickens and roosters and stocked a medical clinic through World Vision. We have shared our money with a neighbouring church in need of major repairs.

God has been good and we hear His voice. So many good things are happening. Where He is leading us, we still do not know. What He has in mind, we will wait and see, but we do not sit back and expect Him to do all the work. The sharing and learning continue and the desire to know more about the teaching of His word grows stronger. ■

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*Gina Sikkema is a freelance writer and a member at West Huntington, Ont.*





# PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2010 Edition, Issue 4



## Presbyterians in Canada UNITE

### The Successes, Challenges and the Long Road Ahead

**C**HURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS across the country continue to demonstrate extraordinary support for PWS&D's relief and rehabilitation efforts following the earthquake in Haiti. The long journey to healing and recovery is well underway, and Presbyterians in Canada are making a difference.

**JANUARY 12, 2010 - 4:53 P.M.**

It is a moment forever etched into the minds of those who survived it: a 7.0 magni-

tude earthquake rocked the Haitian capital city of Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, causing massive destruction, loss of life and displacement of people. The news coming out of Haiti was bleak and heartbreaking. Stories of people who watched loved ones disappear forever under a mountain of rubble were all too frequent. Many survived the destruction only to be faced with the enormous challenges of permanent disabilities, toppled homes and destroyed livelihoods. The country was in turmoil. ➤



Photos: Paul Jeffrey, ACT Alliance





PWS&D's response was swift and effective. Working with local Haitian partners through Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance—one of the largest global church networks conducting relief efforts in Haiti—the immediate response focused on ensuring access to food, clean water, shelter and healthcare. Long-term projects are now underway to rebuild homes and infrastructure, help restart livelihoods and provide trauma counselling. As the journey to recovery continues, hope for the future is surfacing.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HAITI

- \$67** provides vegetable seeds and fruit trees for a family for one growing season
- \$300** supports a child to go to school for one year, providing classroom facilities, supplies, school fees and uniforms.
- \$3,000** builds a transitional home for one family.

### Canadians Respond

Presbyterians in Canada were incredibly generous to PWS&D's Haiti appeal, raising over \$1.5 million. Over 60% of these funds have already been spent in the country, providing a valuable lifeline to desperately needed assistance. Through the ACT Alliance, PWS&D is contributing to a \$22 million project, benefitting more than 200,000 people with food, water, shelter, essential supplies, seeds and psychosocial care. Haitians are the backbone of the humanitarian response in Haiti, and PWS&D respects and supports their right to a life with dignity.

"The ACT Alliance is having a tremendous impact, given the difficult circumstances," explains Alex Macdonald, PWS&D program coordinator. "For the people we are helping, the services we provide offer a substantial boost."

PWS&D is working in partnership with Haitian communities to help them recover from the devastating effects of the disaster and overcome challenges they have faced since then—a commitment that goes beyond immediate needs to genuine re-development with long-term, sustainable solutions.

### An Urgent Need for Shelter

Some of the people who fled the capital after the earthquake have returned to Port-au-Prince, seeking jobs and a means to make an income. Many displaced people relocated from the capital city to the countryside and have decided to stay in their host communities. The biggest challenges for resettlement are lack of available land, confusion over land ownership and the fact that land is still blocked by debris. When people move to new areas they need services, jobs and better shelters. PWS&D is working to help facilitate the process and support both host families as well as those displaced.

"Imagine a city where every potential open space, public and private, is occupied by tent cities," explains Alex Macdonald. "It's a city that can't breathe. Forced evictions of people with no plan in place for resettlement are a troubling violation of peoples' rights."

The ACT Alliance is working with communities to build transitional houses that are secure, provide protection from the elements, such as hurricanes, and are earthquake resistant. These shelters, although temporary, can be constructed quickly and last for a minimum of three years. As well, the materials can be recycled into permanent homes that will be built once the needs for basic and immediate

## KEY ACTIVITIES IN HAITI

With more than \$1.5 million generously donated by Canadian Presbyterians, and over 60% of funds spent, PWS&D continues to provide earthquake victims with:

- Food
- Clean water
- Hygiene kits
- Transitional and permanent housing
- Trauma counselling
- Sanitation facilities
- School kits
- Medical services
- Emergency supplies

PWS&D is also helping establish farming, camp and water committees. These committees create a sense of local ownership, teach new skills and foster community involvement.





diate shelter are met. In the Leogane area, one project is providing 1,200 families with transitional homes.

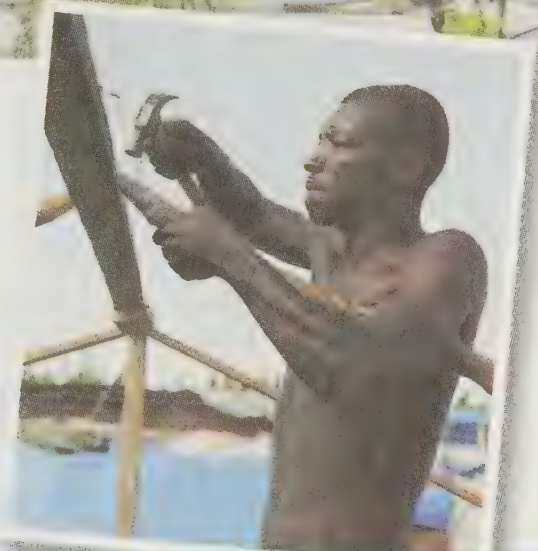
### Initial Response Focuses on Immediate Needs, Education and Agriculture

In the first emergency stage of relief, efforts focused on providing the essential services so desperately needed such as emergency shelters, blankets, mattresses, mosquito nets, clean drinking water and water purification tablets, sanitation services, food parcels and daily meals. For the most vulnerable groups—women, children, the disabled and the elderly—cash transfers were provided to help meet basic needs such as the purchase of medicine, hospital costs and school fees. In one project area, three wells were drilled, 15 water tanks installed at schools and clean drinking water provided for 1,700 families.

The education sector in Haiti was already weak prior to the earthquake, with less than 50% of children attending classes. The earthquake only exacerbated this problem, with up to 94% of schools damaged in some of the most severely affected areas. The ACT Alliance provided school tents and facilities for temporary classrooms, while also providing school materials and facilities such as access to clean water. A school feeding program has been launched and school materials are going out to students. In a project area outside Port-au-Prince, 30 schools are receiving semi-permanent classroom facilities, serving approximately 12,000 children.

### The Long Road to Recovery

"With good coordination and cooperation between local and international organizations, we have been able to avoid the worst case scenarios that could have happened after the earthquake," explains Sylvia ➤

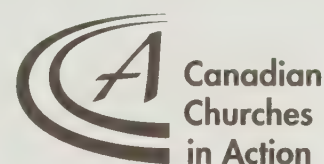


**Did you know?** According to the United Nations, almost 3.5 million people were affected by the earthquake in Haiti with approximately 230,000 killed and 300,000 injured, though the true death toll may never be known.

## Partnership in Action. Canadian Churches in Action.

CCA is a coalition of ten Canadian churches involved in development and relief activities around the world. Through CCA, we work together with international partners to provide a unified response to disasters and access additional sources of funding. Through the CCA network, an additional \$89,000 in funding for Haiti relief has been accessed through the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation. CCA also continues to work with the Canadian International Development Agency to collaborate and access funds.

Many successes and challenges mark the way as we journey along the road to recovery with Haitians. PWS&D is committed to a long-term plan that provides the crucial services so desperately needed. Please continue to remember the victims of Haiti's earthquake in your prayers and through financial contributions to PWS&D. With the dedicated support of generous donors, and the life-saving work of program partners, lives in Haiti are changing. Thank you!







# A Gift of HOPE

## You can give a gift that changes lives!

This Christmas, you can give a gift that changes lives through the Gifts of Change catalogue. Your gifts will help partners of The Presbyterian Church in Canada reach out to people in need in Canada and around the world.

**\$30** provides a family in Tanzania with seeds to diversify their crops

**\$85** provides a pig to a family in Guatemala

**\$340** provides monthly medical checkups to street youth for one year.

Donate online at [www.presbyterian.ca/donate](http://www.presbyterian.ca/donate)

A gift in any amount helps. Make a donation in someone's name and we will send them a gift card.

Even before the earthquake struck, growing enough food for a family was challenging and the effects of the earthquake have only aggravated the situation.

Raulo, country representative of an ACT Alliance member. "However, hundreds of thousands of people are still in extremely vulnerable situations, especially those with inadequate shelter."

The challenge now is to continue with the country's recovery and reconstruction while making decisions that benefit Haitian people. Through the ACT Alliance, PWS&D is supporting an environmentally-friendly pilot school that uses recycled rubble and promotes community participation. The largest challenge for the education sector centres around lack of schools and materials. Almost all schools operated through a school-fee structure to pay teacher salaries but now most teachers have not been paid and are forced to work as volunteers. Together with our partners in Haiti and the ongoing support of Canadians, PWS&D is working toward a long-term goal to get schools fully functioning again.

### Finding Environmental and Agricultural Solutions

Agriculture is a key component of Haiti's economy, with 66% of the population making a living through farming. Even before the earthquake struck, growing enough food for a family was challenging and the effects of the earthquake have only aggravated the situation.

Since many Haitians who lost their homes from the earthquake have moved in with friends and family in the countryside, the burden on host families and communities is high.

People are forced to spend all their money on food and are eating seeds that were to be saved for the planting season. The mountainous slopes were already stripped of trees in order to make charcoal for cooking, causing erosion, deterioration of crop yields and environmental degradation.

Working in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWS&D is supporting an ambitious project assisting 600 farming families in the area of Petit Goave to boost agricultural production, restore livelihoods, improve access to food and increase rates of nutrition. The project is training farmers in how to increase crop yields, protect the environment and providing seeds to grow new foods. A long-term plan to establish seed banks will teach communities how to save a portion of their harvest in order to ensure consistent food availability.

Sorghum was initially provided and ten different types of seeds will be introduced over this two-year project. Beans, peas, corn, tomato, cabbage, sweet peppers and aubergine will soon be in the ground as well as various kinds of fruit trees. Four training farms have been established and are being used to give farmers practical, hands-on training in improved agricultural practices. Farmers are learning how to increase their crop yields in order to have more food available with excess sold locally for increased household income. As well, education in fertilizing techniques and terracing combined with planting tree seedlings is teaching farmers how to prevent soil erosion and improve soil quality. ■



## Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

For more information or to make a donation contact:

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This program is supported by PWS&D with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Editor: Barb Summers  
Communications Coordinator

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*PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development and relief work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



# Manufacturing Conspiracy

AN OVERHEATED BOOK CLAIMS CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS ARE RUINING THE WORLD. **BY DAVID HASKELL**

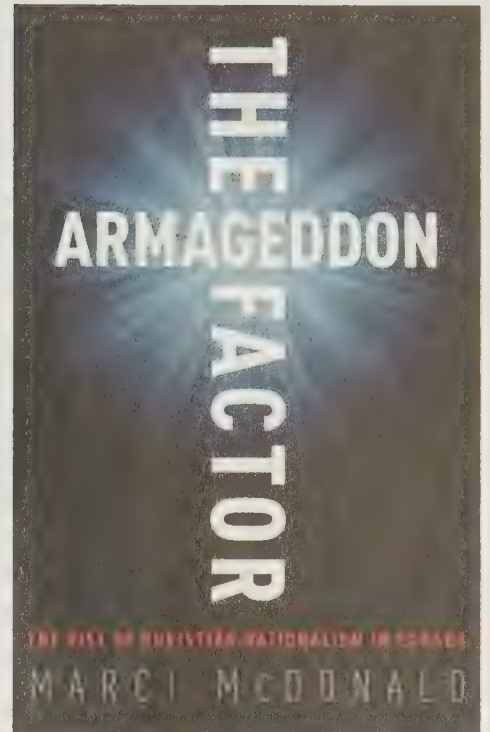
**THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR:  
THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN  
NATIONALISM IN CANADA**  
BY MARCI MCDONALD  
RANDOM HOUSE, 2010

**AUTHOR** Marci McDonald is afraid of conservative Christians and she thinks you should be, too. In her book, she makes every effort to convince readers that this nation's evangelical Protestants (and, to a lesser extent, traditional Catholics) are secretly plotting to take over the country. Their goal, she says, is to create a totalitarian, theocratic state where "nonbelievers—atheists, non-Christians and even Christian secularists—have no place, and those in violation of biblical law, notably homosexuals and adulterers, would merit severe punishment." From a former bureau chief for *Maclean's* and senior writer for *US News* and *World Report*, one would have expected meticulous accuracy of facts and at least a nod in the direction of journalistic objectivity. McDonald's book provides neither.

Foregoing formal footnotes or some other type of rigorous reference system, she uses sketchy "source notes" found in a concluding appendix to back up her claim that born-again types are exercising undue

political influence. Searching those notes for corroborating evidence time and again, I came up empty. For example, she claims radical Christian nationalists are "huddling with members of Parliament in the privacy of their offices to tout traditional values while joining hands with them in prayer" and the national childcare allowance initiated by the Harper Conservatives "was aimed at pleasing the religious right." However, in these cases and others she doesn't indicate where or how she came by her information. Too often I was left to wonder: Is this simply her speculation masquerading as fact?

Of course, in her opinion, no one is more treacherous than Prime Minister Stephen Harper—as the country's leading evangelical politician he's cast as the covert kingpin in McDonald's conspiracy. For instance, she explains that during the last election campaign, while being interviewed on a Christian television show, Harper made the observation that "God works His purposes in our history." While on the surface such an utterance seems benignly generic—something even the most nominally religious person might say in polite conversation—to McDonald's eye, this short phrase was a shrouded



shout-out to fundamentalist sleeper agents. With interpretive skill rivaling the prophet Daniel, she declares: "that unusual phrase seemed to be coded confirmation of the Christian nationalist conviction that Canada has a unique prophetic role to play in the final days before the Second Coming."

That McDonald doesn't like Harper or his policies is fine. There are dyed-in-the-wool Conservative Party supporters who are critical of his governance. But "manufacturing" examples of Harper's foibles is beyond the pale.

To be fair, her observation that Canadian conservative Christians are becoming increasingly involved in the public sphere has merit. To be sure, evangelical participation in the political process has grown steadily in this country since the 1980s. In large part, that participation has been fuelled by dramatic changes in Canadian culture and society. Realizing that unless their voices were heard, the ideas they valued would be relegated to the trash bin of history, conservative Christians have sought ways to join the national conversation. Their ➤



## It's this strongly held position—or, should I say, blindly held position—that begets the book's greatest flaw

political participation has been aided by the creation of a new federal conservative party that, unlike its predecessor the Progressive Conservative Party, peddles social conservatism in addition to fiscal conservatism. Whether in its incarnation as the Reform Party, the Canadian Alliance, or its latest manifestation, the Conservative Party of Canada, this new party of the right has openly welcomed those with biblically-inspired values.

It's this unashamed mix of religious belief and politics—particularly in the federal Conservative Party—that McDonald objects to so strongly. In her opinion, people who are willing to let their conservative Christian faith inform their political decisions are not fit to run for municipal office let alone govern the nation. It's this strongly held position—or, should I say, blindly held position—that begets the book's greatest flaw.

Nowhere in the entirety of her text does McDonald rationally explain why conservative Christians should be one of the only Canadian

minority groups excluded from the halls of power. More specifically, she doesn't explain why humanism, liberalism, secularism, and a host of other ideologies are legitimate theoretical foundations for political decision-making but Christian ideology is not. The justification for her position rests on vague insinuations that there is something underhanded about the political activities of evangelicals and traditional Catholics. However, despite her rigorous digging, she's unable to present any evidence that they've used nefarious means to accomplish their political ends. Instead, she inadvertently demonstrates that their negotiation of the political process is no different from other established interest groups. That is to say, they've used the lawful tools of democracy—forming lobby groups, rallying like-minded citizens, supporting candidates whose values agree with their own—to advance their cause.

From my own perspective, I think a strong argument can and should be

made for tempering the influence that any single religion has on government policy. It's too bad McDonald does not attempt to make that more moderate and nuanced argument.

There are other notable omissions. Nowhere in her text does McDonald mention that multiple studies have shown Canada's evangelicals give more to charity and commit more time to public service volunteering than any other group in the country. Though she routinely uses American examples (especially when she wants a quote from an evangelical that sounds particularly radical) she never mentions the extensive research by sociologists like Sam Reimer that shows Canadian evangelicals are far more moderate than their southern cousins. To further bolster her characterization of Canadian evangelicals as radical, she often "forgets" to distinguish between those on the very fringe of the faith and the moderate majority. Reflected in the mirror of her prose, two or three religious outliers become the face of a Canadian community that represents over 10 per cent of the population.

As her book's dust jacket proclaims, McDonald is convinced a full-out culture war has now arrived in Canada. Her willingness to provide questionable "facts" while omitting information that might contradict her main thesis—that evangelicals and their ilk are dangerous—makes it clear on which side her alliance rests.

It's said that truth is the first casualty of war. McDonald's book is proof of that. ■

*David M. Haskell is associate professor of journalism at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus and the author of Through a Lens Darkly: How the News Media Perceive and Portray Evangelicals.*

## YOUTH IN MISSION

**GULF COAST, USA** MAY 20-28, 2011  
COST: \$800 AGES: 16-30

**NICARAGUA** MAY 3-17, 2011  
COST: \$2000 AGES: 18-30

**I LOVE TAIWAN!** JUNE 27 – JULY 14, 2011  
COST: \$2500 AGES: 18-30

**JERUSALEM - SABELL CONFERENCE**  
JULY 19 – 31, 2011  
COST: \$2000 AGES: 18-30

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JULY 1-9, 2011  
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Emma Lee Procher, 8,  
St. Andrew's, Ross, Ont.

Cori Howard, 6, Nassagawa,  
Campbellville, Ont.



Jasmine Tracey, 11,  
St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



Jennifer D. Logan, St. Andrew's, Nanaimo, B.C.



Rachel Hamilton, 11, St. Mark's, Charlottetown



Peyton Drynan, 8, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



Elizabeth Sankar, 42, Rexdale, Toronto

# Thank You!

Thank you to all our Christmas Art Contest entrants. We were blown away by the amazing artwork, which is featured throughout this issue.

A special thank you to Stephanie Clarke for her help with sorting the entries.



# Finding God

A SURVEY OF EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE. BY PAMELA MCCARROLL

Jasmine Tracey, 11, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



J.J.T



“My faith in God is what allows me to live and breathe and have my being. It connects me with my friends, my family and my work colleagues by simply just being within my inner self. My faith provides me with a special confidence and calm that only comes through faith in God and Jesus Christ.”

For this past year, the *Record's* Theology 101 column has been asking the question, Where in the World is God? Throughout the year, Presbyterian theologians have sought to recognize the signs of God's presence in suffering, nature, worship, art, scripture, Christ, neighbour, community and the written word. This month we turn the theological reflection to a few dozen active lay members of the Presbyterian Church, about half of whom responded during the summer months to a questionnaire. To say we were overwhelmed would be an understatement. They were reflective, prayerful, joyous, spiritual. They told some very powerful and personal stories, some of which are reflected here. Across the board, the respondents were eager to relate their sense of God's call not so much as a call to a specific vocation but rather as a call to respond faithfully in each action and interaction of their lives. “I believe my faith in God is infused in every part of my life—from what I do, how I do it, what I think, how I interact with people.”

“In my view you can recognize God's presence from the moment you open your eyes in the morning until you shut them at night knowing that the day and the world are [God's] and we are participants on the journey.”

In this article I present several common themes that emerged from these reflections on God at work in our lives. All followers of Christ are to discern God's call in our lives and to respond to this call through our work in the world—

whether as family member, farmer, accountant, labourer or service worker. What we do in the world is intended to be a kind of worship—a responsive enjoyment and glorification of God in life.

All the quotations are from the respondents.

## God at work in Relationships

“I see God's presence in the faces of my grandchildren.”

“When I had a baby and she was absolutely perfect—I was totally overwhelmed and knew that God was present then.”

The most common response to the question of what is most meaningful in life was relationships—with family, friends and church community. Some who teach described a sense of God's presence in the faces of their students and the passion for learning. Several reported a sense of God's presence in interactions between people when the flow of connection is felt.

“God's presence is clearest to me in unexpected acts of kindness between people.”

## God at work in Scripture and Prayer

“I have found the routine of reading my Bible every morning ... as well as praying... has brought me closer to God, it gives me a positive start to the day, and it has given me a better understanding of what God has in store for me.”

Many identified the disciplines of scripture reading and prayer as a means of experiencing God at work in daily life. Passages of scripture intersect with experience and draw us to new ways of being faithful. Prayer is experienced variously. Some describe it as regular daily practice, some as an ongoing conversation through a work day—a prayer without ceasing. Interestingly, in most cases God is seen to be responsive to prayer, but most often in ways we may not want. “God has always been there through it all [through times of disappointment], patiently waiting for attention. My prayers, sometimes stunted and late, have been answered even though the answers follow God's way, not mine.”

## God at work in Us

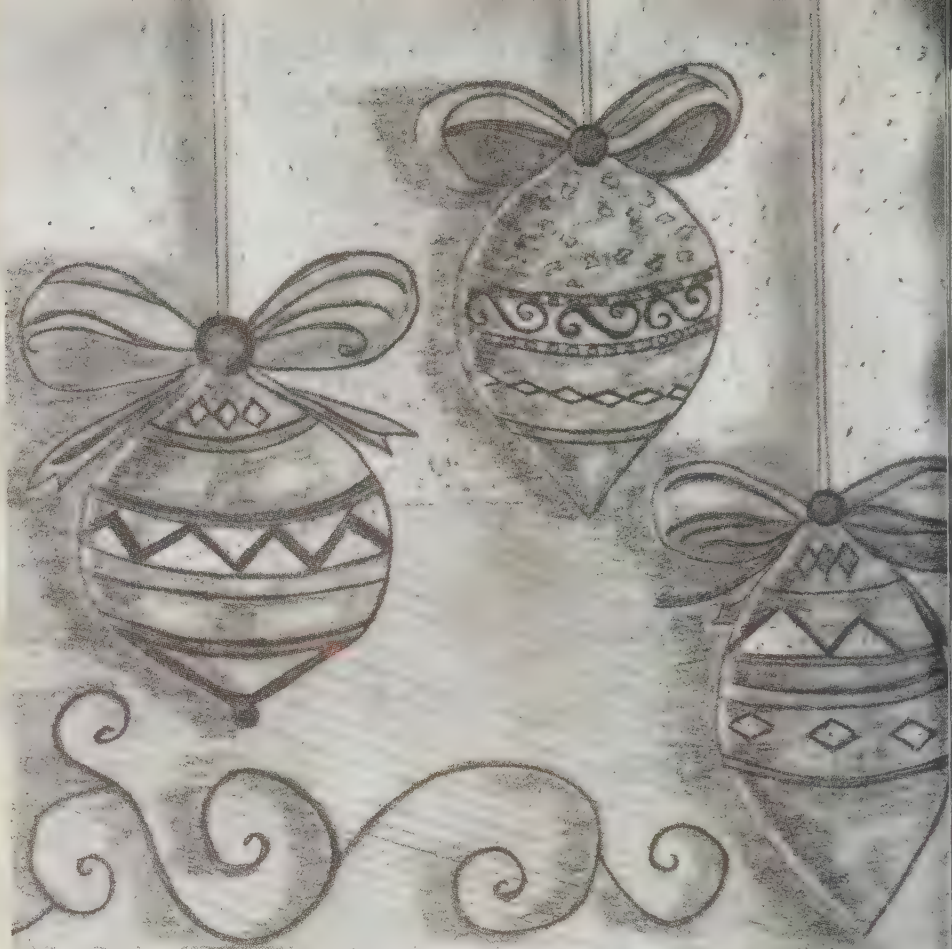
“Whether it's at the dentist's office or gas station, part of seniors' services, or providing care for the homeless, I hope that the people I deal with feel God's touch.”

“God gives us opportunities to share [God's] love ➤





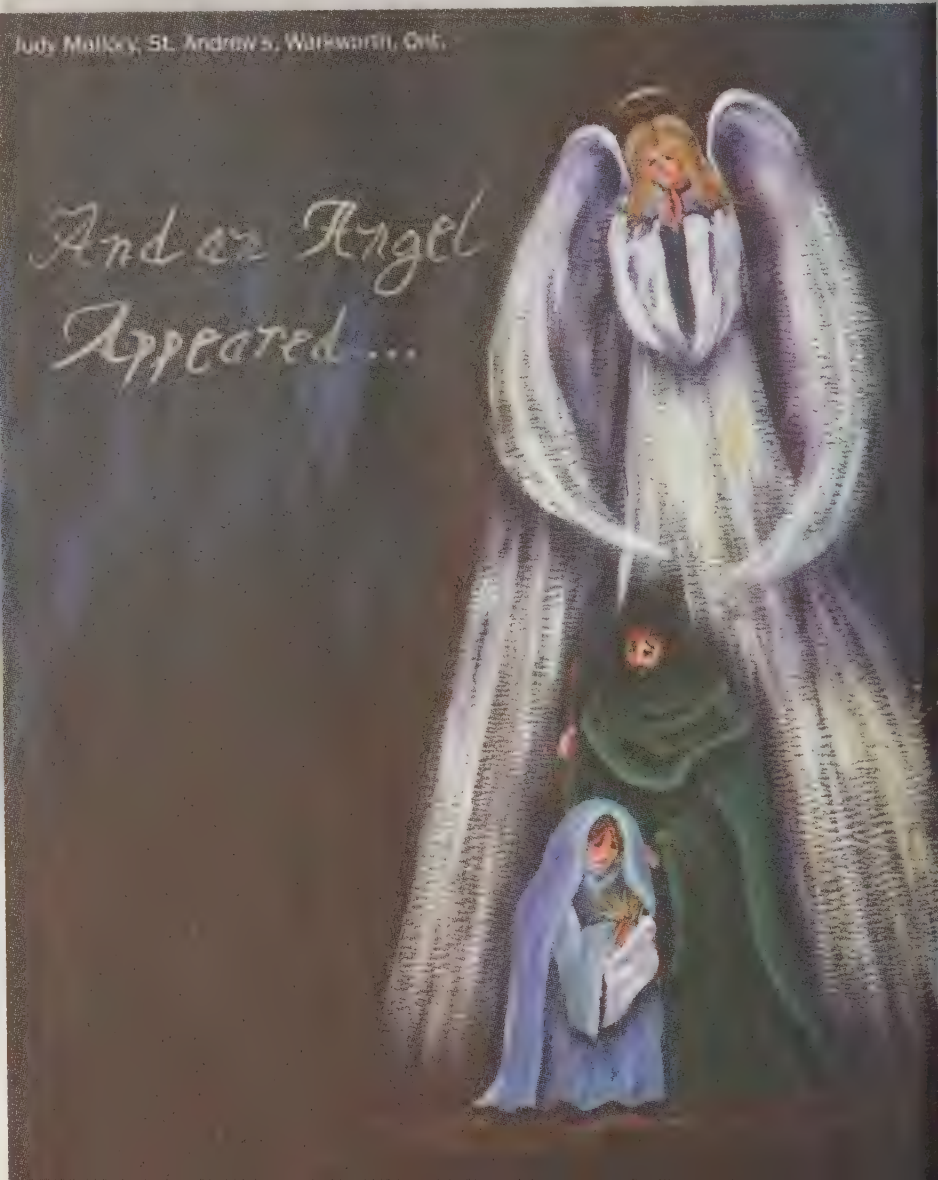
Fay Strang, 75,  
St. Andrew's,  
Warkworth, Ont.



Glenis Beuchanan, St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.



Judy Mallory, St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.



Judy Mallory, St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.



and comfort. We need to be open to God's leading."

God is at work when we follow Christ's example—in kindness, care and compassion; in treating others with honesty, patience, respect, fairness and dignity no matter who they are or what they have done. In reflecting upon his work in a provincial jail, one respondent described his need to treat the prisoners with "honesty and respect ... [seeking to] exemplify the same care and comfort that our Lord pledges.

"Christ has been my mentor and guide."

God is at work through our conscience—the "still small voice" within urging us to respond in love and faithfulness. The challenge for many is to respond to this call of conscience in daily life. "My experience of God is not always positive. I am like one of the goats in Matthew 25. I see strangers in church and do not always welcome them. I am approached by homeless people and ignore them. I receive a request for help for the needy and I pass by on the other side. After each occasion I say, 'Yes, God was there, but I did not want to interact with Him.' I am working on being more of a sheep than a goat. God is always present in my conscience."

God is at work in our service within the church—in the courts, in mission, in administration, in theological learning and Christian education. God is at work through a sense of responsibility for others. We are entrusted with relationships, with people to steward and care for on God's behalf. God calls us to inspire others to be a caring and compassionate presence in the world.

God is at work in transformative experiences in our lives. "As an immigrant with low self esteem and very conscious about my strong accent, I often felt inferior to my colleagues and intimidated by others, especially my boss. [Then] I started ... seeing people around me and myself through God's eyes and mind. God taught me that we are all the same to [God]. Now I feel comfortable around and closer to most people. I look at people as God's creation and I don't look at their status, position, or possessions."

## God at work in Others

When we serve others, we serve God. In describing her work with needy people in the inner city, one respondent says, "Every day I serve these individuals with grace and dignity and in so doing I am serving my God with joy, compassion and love ..." Several people identified that God is at work in those who are broken and oppressed. Christ comes to us in the faces of others; inviting us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner.

God is at work in inspiring acts of courage and compassion—in the stories of people taking in Jewish families in Europe between 1939-1945 at risk to themselves; in the passion and convictions of students seeking to learn, to understand, to care; in the companionship of others

during times of desperation and loss.

God is at work in congregations in the care and love and support through difficult times. "Shortly after attending that church, my youngest son was killed in a tragic house fire. I was so thankful that I had that church and my faith to support me at that time. My relationship with God has been strengthened."

In all cases, God's work through others inspired receptivity. In receiving from others we are also opened to receiving God more deeply.

## God at work in Creation and Art

God is at work in unexpected moments of grace, of overwhelming awe, in the midst of the intricacies of God's creation. The gifts of God are seen in the delicacy of a hummingbird, in the growth and blossoming of a garden, in the mystery and wonder of nature's beauty, and in the creativity of the human imagination.

"When I am outdoors and I look up at the trees and the sky, there is such beauty in nature; I always marvel ... at how enormous the world is. And I feel grateful to God for the beauty and majesty of nature."

"God is present in my garden. There are birds. There are trees. There is a view close by where the city can be seen on the backdrop of blue skies and ocean. God is present in St. John's."

"God's presence is clearest to me in the awesomeness of works of art, be they drama, music, painting, architecture, sculpture."

"I am drawn to [the arts and nature]—for they are keys to the mystery of life."

## God at work in Dark Times

God is at work in times of loss and agony. "My partner died in a terrible accident and I was overcome with grief and anxiety about the future. I had an infant son and felt very lonely. One particular night was extremely hard and I was distraught. Suddenly the biblical verse, 'the Lord is my shepherd,' came into my mind and I said the words out loud. By the end of my recitation I felt a profound sense of relief. God had been with me in this dark moment and I no longer felt alone."

"Afterwards (when my wife had died), when I was experiencing the pure, raw anguish of unbearable grief, [I felt] God's love and compassion most closely, and indeed, [it] saw me through."

God is at work even when we don't feel God's presence. "I confess there are many times when I do not feel God's



presence, but recently I learned that one of the greatest and humblest people of faith of all time, Mother Theresa, experienced long periods when she felt abandoned by God ... If such a spiritual great as Mother Theresa felt like this at times, then surely we need not be discouraged when there are times in our lives when we seem unable to feel God's presence. And when we carry on trying to do God's will, in spite of this seeming lack of affirmation from God, is this, itself, not faith?"

"Sometimes ... my faith in God is challenged in my work. Teaching on the Holocaust and Nazism can be very difficult as the details of violence, suffering and terrible injustice of this era are often overwhelming. However, my faith gives me hope that beyond the inhumanity of this world there is peace, love and resolution for those who have suffered so much—especially the children."

God is at work in retrospect giving strength in times of crisis. "My husband had his face burned twice in 11 years. We had four young boys ... My husband was off work for three years and spent about half that time away for skin grafting. Looking back over that time, God had to be looking over us."

Faith Lokaisingh, 9, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.



Another respondent reflects on life: "When I look back I realize that God was present, not to heal, not to make things better, but to give me physical and emotional strength I might not otherwise have."

"When things are difficult ... I know God will give me strength to see things through."

## God at work in Gratitude and Humility

For many respondents, the opportunity to ponder God at work in their lives enabled a life review that inspired humility and gratitude. "Anything good that I have been able to do, I attribute to God's grace."

"I recognize God in my life because [God] has given me the wisdom and strength to make the most of every major decision throughout many decades."

God is at work everywhere and when we see this we can "revel in the beauty of each day ... and realize we are loved by a God that makes all things possible."

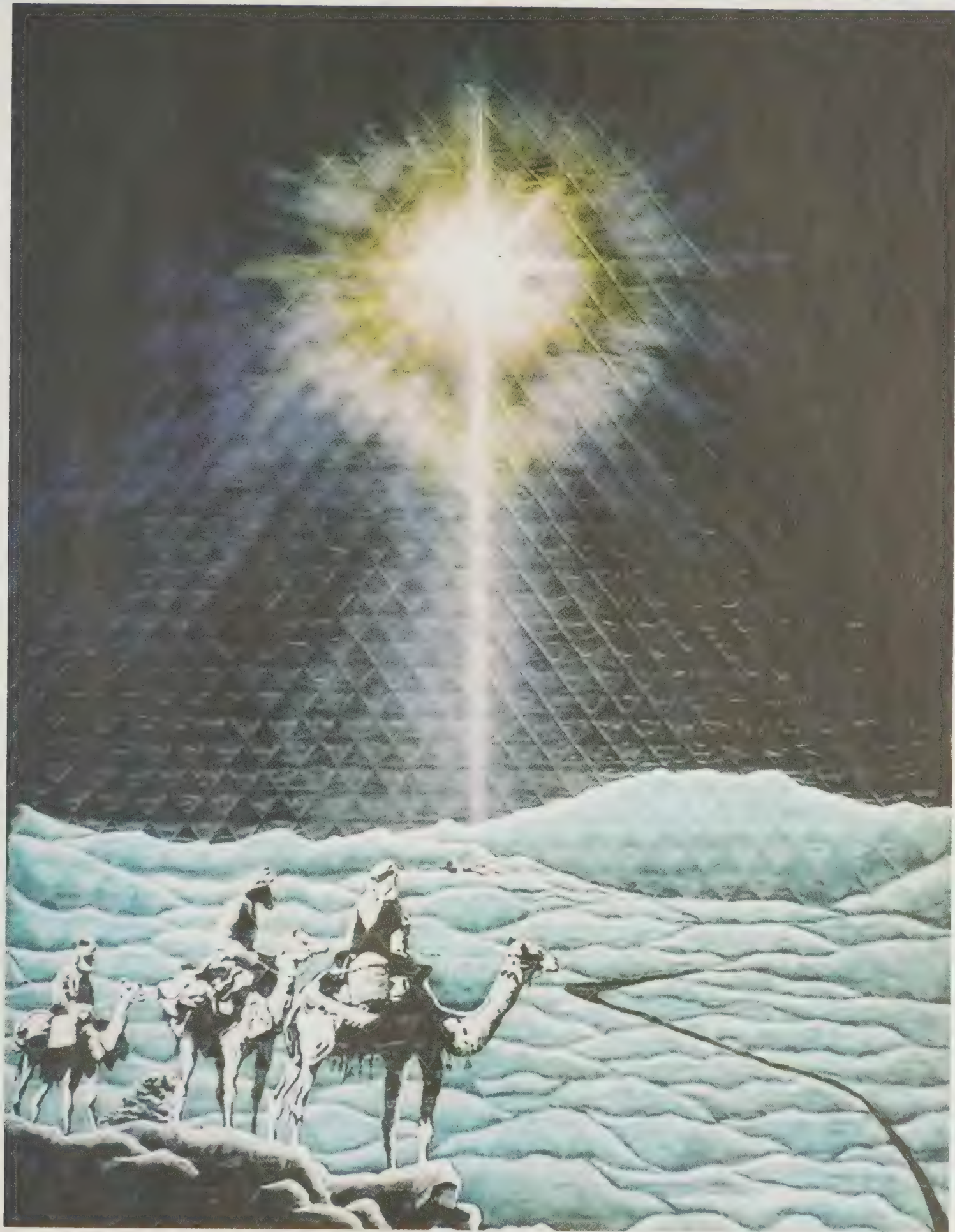
In a final crescendo of gratitude and humility, one respondent quotes Micah 6:8 to sum up God's call in life. "What does the Lord require of us? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God."

Amen.

The journey to write this article for our denominational magazine began as another 'to do' in a long list of 'to dos.' Yet as I set down to work, to draw out the emerging themes, to honour the experiences shared by these siblings in faith and to reflect theologically on God at work, I have found myself caught up in their stories, transfixed by their testimony. Hours pass as minutes as I listen and seek to bear witness to the mysterious ways God works in life, in real peoples' lives. I have been brought to tears by the courageous honesty and tenacious trust of many respondents in the face of anguish and devastating loss. I am inspired by their witness for justice and compassion for God's beloved children and the world. I am humbled by experiences of grace, divine generosity and God's abiding steadfastness. In reading and reflecting on these shared journeys, I find myself surrounded by the community of faith invited again to partake in Christ's body. In the coming together of this wee article, my work of reading, thinking and writing has become a means to glorify and enjoy God in humble thanksgiving. Through no will of my own this work has become worship, blessing, a response of gratitude to God's overflowing grace. Thanks be. ■

*Rev. Dr. Pamela McCarroll is assistant professor of pastoral theology at Knox College, Toronto. She is a member of the Theology 101 committee on behalf of the Record.*





"Star of Wonder" by Andrew Anderson, 38, Graceview, Etobicoke, Ont.



# Going Viral

IT IS CHRIST'S DNA THAT SHAPES US. BY HERB GALE

**O**n April 11, 2009, a frumpy, middle-aged woman from a little village in Scotland stood on the stage of *Britain's Got Talent* and announced that she dreamed of being a professional singer "as successful as Elaine Paige" (a famous English singer) prompting the judges to grimace and members of the audience to snicker. Then she opened her mouth and began to sing...

*I dreamed a dream in time gone by  
When hope was high and life worth living.  
I dreamed that love would never die.  
I dreamed that God would be forgiving.*

The judges' faces lit up and the audience leapt to its feet in wild applause, and within nine days the video of her performance had been watched over 100 million times on YouTube and other social media sights around the world. Susan Boyle and her improbable dream that would not die had gone viral. Within the year, Boyle had released her debut album, *I Dreamed a Dream*, which sold six million copies in six weeks; and she had hosted her own TV special in which she sang a duet with none other than Elaine Paige herself, who has called Boyle "a role model for everyone who has a dream."

I have a dream, too. My dream is that generosity will go viral in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, transforming the church and the world

around us. Some would argue that is a silly, unrealistic dream. "The PCC is dying," they proclaim. "We need to be cutting back and downsizing. We need to adjust to a society in which the church, and in particular the aging Presbyterian Church, will become increasingly irrelevant if not extinct." And yet the dream of growing the

WE MUST ALL BECOME  
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BACK INTO OURSELVES

generosity of the church won't let me go and continues to gnaw at me and tug at me and prod me.

The dream of growing the generosity of the church first took hold of me while I was leading worship at the first Stewards by Design conference held in April 1999. Having just led seven worship services during the conference, I returned home completely drained, thinking I would need days to recover from my

exhausting schedule. To my surprise, I woke up the next morning, refreshed and invigorated with an odd thought in my head, "Herb, I am calling you to grow the generosity of my church." It was just a fleeting thought and seemed like a preposterous idea, and yet as I allowed the idea to settle into my consciousness, an unexpected sense of joy leapt up inside me.

I believe that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has been crippled by a poor cousin mindset for far too long. I believe that even now God is preparing a vital future for the Church. And I believe that future will only blossom and grow as we discard the myth of scarcity, embrace the theology of God's abundance and practice generosity in our individual lives and corporate life together.

Some say the theme of generosity has nothing to do with the gospel, but my answer is that it goes to the very heart of the gospel and to the very heart of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son ..." (John 3:16) "For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9) When the Spirit was poured out upon the church at Pentecost, a new spirit of generosity took hold of the people who began to share their resources for the common good. (Acts 2:44-45) As much as anything, it was this spirit of generosity that went viral in the early church and infused the nascent community



with a sense of God's abundant grace that simply could not be contained, spilling over and transforming the world around them.

In a recent Cardus discussion paper entitled, *A Canadian Culture of Generosity*, Ray Pennings and Michael Van Pelt issue a wake-up call documenting that the social fabric we cherish in Canada is in danger of eroding unless the private, public and voluntary sectors begin talking together and working together to grow the spirit of generosity within our nation. They present a challenging goal to our country: "To translate individual acts of generosity into a culture of generosity—a defining pattern of behaviour which becomes so engrained that it emerges as part of our collective Canadian identity, our DNA." I believe that

now is the time for the Presbyterian Church to take the lead, turning Pennings' and Van Pelt's dream for Canada into a reality. We can do this because generosity is already a part of our DNA: we are the body of Christ, and it is Christ's DNA that shapes us and Christ's Spirit that inspires us.

As I travel across the church, I am listening to the stories of generosity happening in congregation after congregation. I will continue to share what I hear in this column and on the moderator's blog and in sermons and conversations. But this is not just my work as moderator. We must all become a part of the conversation as we celebrate the stories of what God in Christ is doing among us and share our best practices. Now is not the time to pull back into ourselves. Now

is the time to move forward in a spirit of generosity, as we trust that God's grace is sufficient for all our challenges. Let's each of us do our part to make generosity go viral in our church. After all, if a frumpy, middle-aged woman can capture the imagination of the world, just imagine what God could do with more than 100,000 Presbyterians! ■

Blessings,



*Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at [presbyterian.ca/moderator](http://presbyterian.ca/moderator).*

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that he gave his only son...

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# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).



## Kitchener East, Kitchener, Ont.

Keith and Rose Vanderkruk recently celebrated Keith's 90th birthday at Kitchener East Presbyterian Church.

They came from Holland in 1954, have three children and were members of Knox, Dundas, and Knox, Waterloo, Ont.

Keith was active as an elder, supervising and teaching Sunday school and both were founding members of Waterloo North. Next they were off to St. Andrew's in Huntsville, Ont., and having survived cancer, they finally moved back to Kitchener-Waterloo.

Family and friends joined them in the celebration, with best wishes coming from several political dignitaries, including Governor General Michaëlle Jean, and that was just the icing on the cake.



## Mount Zion, Carberry, Man.

At Mount Zion, elder emeritus John Drysdale seems nonplussed to be greeted by a scarecrow on the last Sunday in October. Perhaps it was one of those nice scarecrows which abound in legend. Or, perhaps Drysdale saw through elder Earl McLaren's clever disguise as greeter that morning. Either way, fun was had by all.



## Knox, Leamington, Ont.

In October, Knox celebrated Louise Bryon who has served as organist and choir director for 40 years. She has also served as church secretary for many years. In her honour, some church members wrote a hymn celebrating her service which was sung by the entire congregation as a surprise. Cake followed, of course. Pictured left to right: Dale Butler (elder), Rev. Scott McAndless, Louise Bryon.





### St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont.

As part of the 163rd anniversary celebrations in October, St. Andrew's honoured Rev. Rosemary Doran on her retirement by bestowing upon her the title of minister emeritus. From left: Ian and Ruth Kelly-Boxe with son, Justin, Rosemary, husband Rev. Gerald Doran, Barb McMechan Woods and Richard McMechan.

### Knox, Georgetown, Ont.

Knox topped their 150th year with a gala dinner, which was enjoyed by the members, government and church representatives, and past ministers. Here, Bill Karn, clerk of session for Limehouse Church, presents Steve McNamara, clerk of session at Knox, with a framed copy of the original session minutes of Nov. 1861, at which time the two churches agreed to join forces as a two-point charge. Since then they have worked well together, sharing ministers down through 150 years. Knox and Limehouse are still both busy and vibrant churches, and they expect to celebrate their 200th anniversaries still working well together.





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## Recognitions and Transitions

**CORRECTION:** St. John's, Cresswell, Ont.,  
Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough;  
Recognition service for Rev. Virginia  
Brand, April 20, 2010.

## Obituaries

**PFEFFER, REV. KATHLEEN (KATE)  
ELIZABETH, B.A., M.Div., D.Min.**  
Aug. 25, 2010, in her 65th year  
in Victoria, B.C. Former program  
director, Knox, Burlington, Ont.,  
and retired minister, New St.  
Andrew's Church, Dover, Ont.,  
and Valetta. She is survived by  
her daughter, Jessica Robin (Jesse  
Skulmoski), grandson, Jasper Robin  
and her brother, Patrick Hagey. ■



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CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

# Called to Wonder

## Peace on Earth

Listen to your favourite Christmas carols as you move through the maze below. Think about ways you can help to bring PEACE on EARTH.

Start at the arrow on the lower left, moving through the first dove, the globe, and then the second dove.

When you have finished, pray for peace in our world.

Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

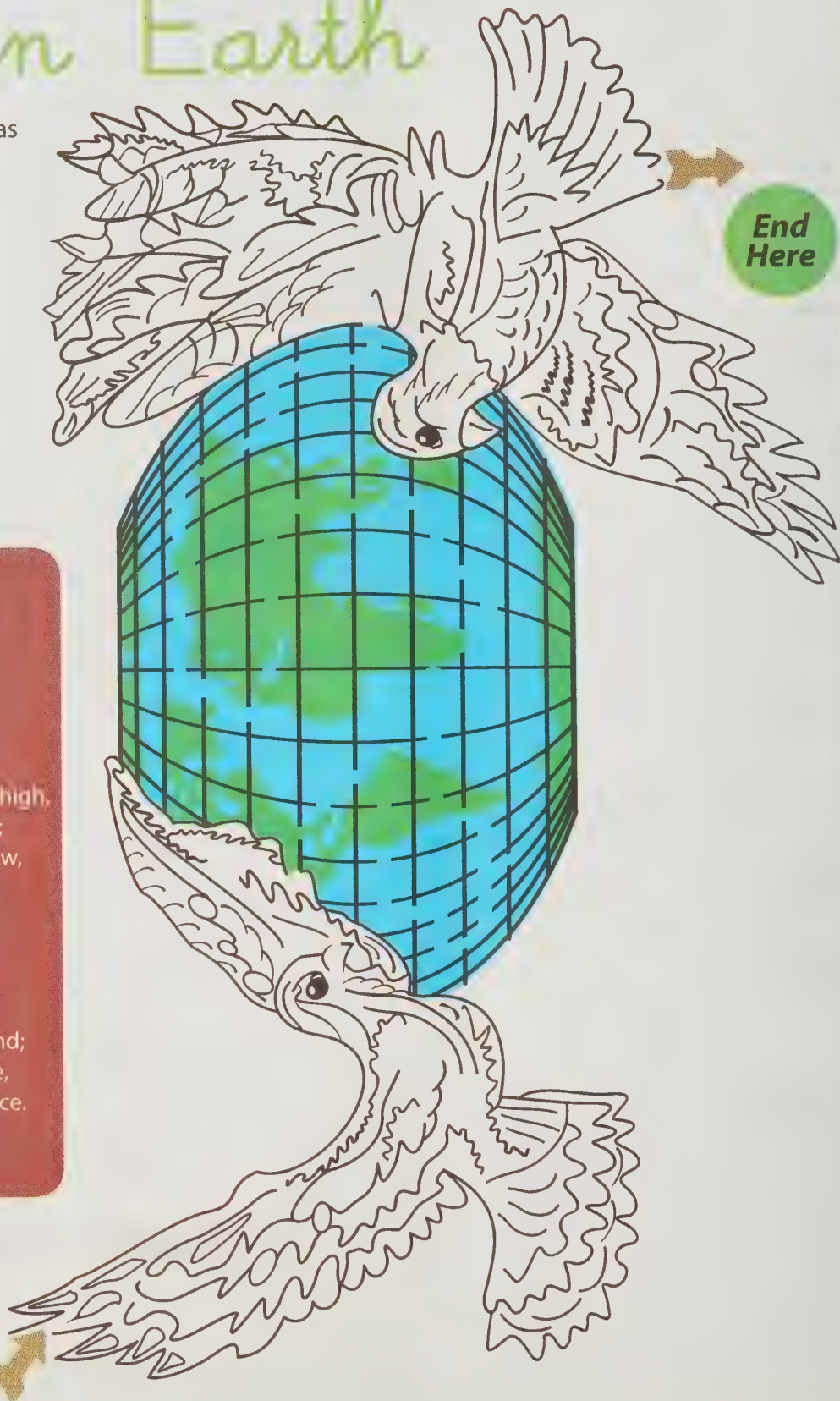
Oh come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
And order all things far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Oh come, desire of nations, bind  
All peoples in one heart, one mind;  
Bid envy, strife and discord cease,  
And be thyself our source of peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Verses 1, 3 and 7 of Hymn #122 in  
the Book of Praise

**Start  
Here**

**End  
Here**





# I want beauty, peace, tranquility and wonder; not ugly, jostling crowds in a shopping uproar, locked in economic pandemonium, hell-bent on firmly nailing down Christmas as a season of debt-induced perpetual poverty

For the Journey, continued from page 50  
Advent calendar.

The other image in my mind was stirred up by the number of swans present on this particular day and the aggravating reference I had made to "seven swans a' swimming." That line somehow placed me right in the middle of the mall in our nearest city being jostled about by crowds of people desperate to satisfy their consumer addictions while the piped in music bellowed *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Oh how I detest that side of Christmas.

The kind of Christmas I need to be launched into by Advent is the "peace on earth, good will to men" kind of Christmas. It certainly is not the piped-in-mall-music *Twelve Days of Christmas* variety. I want beauty, peace, tranquility and wonder; not ugly jostling crowds in a shopping uproar, locked in economic pandemonium, hell-bent on firmly nailing down Christmas as a season of debt-induced perpetual poverty. I want a nice, pretty, religious Christmas with close family and good food; not a hideous secular economic binge marked by strong-arming strangers and fast food-induced diarrhea. Do you get the picture?

The only problem is that the Christ whose name I bear, whose advent I await and whose birth I celebrate at Christmas didn't come into the picture of beauty, peace and tranquility that the swans have stirred up in my head, the one that I so much want to be a part of at this time of year. He came into the other one. If you read the Bible seriously, Jesus was born as a refugee in a city absent of family, a secular world so jostled with crowds that he had to be cradled in a hay trough, so ugly that his birth resulted in the assassination of many innocent children by a hideous regime that continually manipulated the economy to lock masses of people in perpetual poverty. That's the picture of the first Christmas. And as much as

I wished it wasn't, that is precisely the point. It seems that somehow the swan-induced warm fuzzy Christmas I crave is a farce, at least according to my Bible.

Each year, more and more, and most particularly at this time of year, I am ashamed to confess I have to rely on my Bible to jerk me back to reality with regards to my faith expectations. You would think by now I would be starting to get it right. But the craving for a warm fuzzy is deep and carnal. What I so often don't get right is that the Jesus of my faith came into the middle of an ugly, jostling culture and a hideous kingdom of physical and economic oppression. He came as a counterculture king, proclaiming a counterculture kingdom that demanded justice for the poor, oppressed and impoverished. He was born in a Bethlehem animal shelter virtually at the foot of the artificial mountain where King Herod had built a lavish fortress mausoleum for himself. And into the midst of this bustling madness of Herodian oppression, he came birthing a kingdom of God where, in his own words: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the

oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19)

This Advent, thanks to the seven swans a' swimming out my back door, my whole being has been tweaked to the tension between the warm fuzzy religion of my carnal craving and the radical gospel of my Master's birthing. What remains to be seen, what has not fully arrived, at least in my life, is what I do with this tension. I am, after all, getting longer in the tooth. And yet, I am aware that others before me, others I know who became similarly tweaked in the later stages of life, have found themselves taking their lives into ministries that more closely reflect the biblical Christmas kingdom birth. I find myself extremely inspired and challenged by their example this Advent season, and once again I am seriously confronting myself with the question: Can there ever be a true Christian peace and spirituality without the seeking of justice for the oppressed in real and tangible ways? ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.



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# Seven Swans a' Swimming

SEEKING A TRUE CHRISTMAS PEACE. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

*"THE TRUMPETERS ARE IN!"* said Linda.

I stumbled out of bed and joined her gawking out of our front room window. In the early morning sunlight streaming up the lake, the pearl white trumpeter swans were absolutely stunning as they floated just off the shore on the dark winter water of Lac La Hache. They were framed on the shore by six inches of freshly fallen snow. They supported jet-black bills with a tiny little flesh-coloured stripe at the base of the lower bill. The young were now full grown in size but were still the dusky gray colour of adolescents. They could have been the more common whistler swans except for their huge size and their distinct but subtle markings. But what identified them as trumpeter swans more than anything else was their honking. It sounded like a cross between a '57 Buick

and a B-flat trumpet. There were seven of them playing in the band, doing tip-ups in the shallows adjacent to our dock and flashing their yellow garters for all to see.

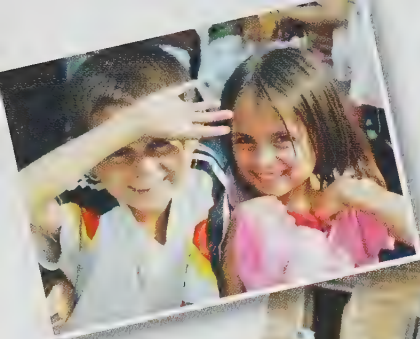
"Huh! Seven swans a' swimming and it's the beginning of Advent," I said.

I got on with my day. But I had two opposing Advent images in my head that had been stirred by the swans—one that I liked and one that I disliked. It was oddly disturbing. I loved the peaceful image of the huge pearl white trumpeter swans on the black winter water, framed by the freshly fallen snow and highlighted by the sun hanging just above the horizon. It was the quintessential picture of beauty and peace, peace that I crave, especially as a hectic Christmas is slowly winched into view by the continued on page 49









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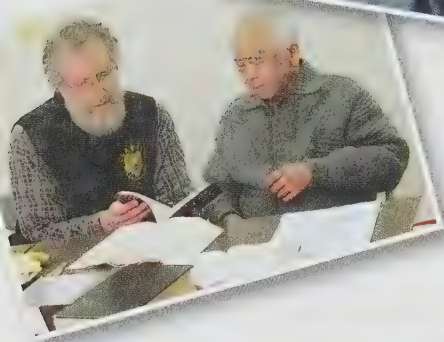
**\$15** helps the Bible Society in Taiwan print one Hakka Bible

**\$100** allows one child from a low-income family in Montreal to attend summer day camp

**\$30** provides a family in Malawi with seeds to diversify their crops

**\$340** provides monthly medical checkups to a street youth in Nicaragua for one year

**\$90** provides an emergency kit for a refugee family



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